

# REPRESENTING THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE



EDITED BY  
STEPHEN GREENBLATT

## **Representing the English Renaissance**

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## Contents

### Introduction

by Stephen Greenblatt   vii

STEPHEN GREENBLATT

Murdering Peasants: Status, Genre,  
and the Representation of Rebellion   1

LOUIS ADRIAN MONTROSE

"Shaping Fantasies": Figurations of Gender and Power  
in Elizabethan Culture   31

STEVEN MULLANEY

Strange Things, Gross Terms, Curious Customs:  
The Rehearsal of Cultures in the Late Renaissance   65

PATRICIA FUMERTON

"Secret" Arts: Elizabethan Miniatures and Sonnets   93

JOEL FINEMAN

Shakespeare's "Perjur'd Eye"   135

PAUL ALPERS

Pastoral and the Domain of Lyric in Spenser's *Shepherd's  
Calendar*   163

ROBERT WEIMANN

*Fabula* and *Historia*: The Crisis of the "Universall  
Consideration" in *The Unfortunate Traveller*   181

STANLEY CAVELL

"Who does the wolf love?": Reading *Coriolanus*   197

STEPHEN ORGEL

Prospero's Wife   217

STANLEY FISH

Authors-Readers: Jonson's Community of the Same   231

JOSEPH LOEWENSTEIN

The Script in the Marketplace   265

CHRISTOPHER PYE

The Sovereign, the Theater, and the Kingdome of  
Darknesse: Hobbes and the Spectacle of Power 279

JANET E. HALLEY

Heresy, Orthodoxy, and the Politics of Religious  
Discourse: The Case of the English Family of Love 303

RICHARD HELGERSON

The Land Speaks: Cartography, Chorography, and  
Subversion in Renaissance England 327

List of Contributors 363

Index 365

## Introduction

THESE ESSAYS ON ENGLISH LITERATURE and culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries appeared in the pages of the journal *Representations* between 1983 and 1986. In the journal, which is multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural in focus, they took their place next to articles with strikingly different concerns—pauper funerals in nineteenth-century England, witchcraft and colonialism in Colombia, early Chinese pictorial vessels, Civil War photographs, for example—and hence the interest of each essay centered on the particular, highly specific problem defined and addressed by the individual interpreter. But brought together in this collection, they disclose certain shared thematic and methodological concerns. These by no means constitute a single method or a unified “line” (a quick glance at the essays by Mullaney, Fineman, and Cavell, for example, will attest to the diversity of both theory and practice in this volume), but they do define a common ground, a critical territory that differs in important respects from the historical concerns of traditional Renaissance scholarship, the interpretive concerns of formalist literary criticism, and the theoretical concerns of deconstructive analysis.

Perhaps the simplest way of characterizing this common ground is to say that each essay, in its own way, is concerned with the status of what we may call, to adopt the phrase Paul Alpers uses in his contribution, the “domain of art.” Of course, all literary criticism may be thought to be concerned with this domain, simply by virtue of being “literary.” But in fact, most criticism simply *assumes* the category of the literary without interrogating it or taking its measure. An essential element of linguistic self-reflexiveness, a language that has been marked off as an autonomous realm of aesthetic pleasure, is taken to be the very condition of literary discourse.

The essays in this volume do not assume the literary as a stable ground in the Renaissance and do not take for granted the existence of an autonomous aesthetic realm. They share an awareness of the complexity, the historical contingency, of the category of literary discourse throughout this period. It is not, of course, that literature did not exist in this period—there is a highly sophisticated understanding of the place of poetry, drama, and fiction in the larger spectrum of discourses—but rather that its boundaries are contested, endlessly renegotiated, permeable. These contests and negotiations are all social; they do not occur in a private chamber of the artist’s imagination, for that imagination, in its materials and resources and aspirations, is already a social construct. This does not mean that art can be reduced to social structures such as class, status, or kinship, any more than it can be simply collapsed into the material basis for its production and

consumption. A culture's diverse social constructions are at once interconnected and differentiated, so that if, for example, a culturally dominant conception of social inequality shapes artistic representations, those representations have at the same time the power to constrain, shape, alter, and even resist the conception of social inequality. If in my own contribution to this volume, "Murdering Peasants," I chart certain social constraints on genre (here the design for a commemorative monument by Dürer, a passage from Sidney's romance epic *Arcadia*, and an early history play by Shakespeare), I attempt at the same time to register the generic constraints on social representation.

The complexity of the dialectical relation between a Renaissance literary text and the culture in which it was created is powerfully summed up at the close of Louis Adrian Montrose's essay, "'Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture." *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Montrose writes, is "in a double sense, a *creation* of Elizabethan culture: for it also creates the culture by which it is created, shapes the fantasies by which it is shaped, begets that by which it is begotten." At first glance, this is an implausible proposition, because the culture, and here specifically the cult, of Queen Elizabeth did in an obvious and literal sense precede Shakespeare's play. When Oberon refers to "the imperial votress" who walks "In maiden meditation, fancy-free," he is using a symbolic language that is by the early 1590s already elaborately developed and widely deployed. It is precisely such use of cultural materials that lends support to the traditional historical approach to literature, an approach that finds history to lie outside the texts, to function in effect as the object to which signs in the texts point. History in this view is a body of signifieds to which literary signifiers must be attached, or re-attached by the scholar after time has eroded the connections.

There is much that is indispensable in this approach, and yet Montrose's essay, like many of the other essays in this volume, clearly finds it incomplete and inadequate. For history is not simply discovered in the precincts surrounding the literary text or the performance or the image; it is found in the artworks themselves, as enabling condition, shaping force, forger of meaning, censor, community of patronage and reception. And the work of art is not the passive surface on which this historical experience leaves its stamp but one of the creative agents in the fashioning and re-fashioning of this experience. Hence Montrose's assertion that the play creates the culture by which it is created: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* did not invent the cult of Elizabeth, but it is one of the places in which that cult gets shaped and transmitted and empowered and questioned as well as represented and expressed.

Steven Mullaney's essay, "Strange Things, Gross Terms, Curious Customs: The Rehearsal of Cultures in the Late Renaissance," asks us similarly to reconsider the nature of Renaissance representation in the light of a less passive conception of mimesis. Why does one culture gather and mime the signs of

another? How are such signs organized and displayed? What if we called representation “rehearsal” and asked what social uses such rehearsals serve? Mullaney observes that in the sixteenth century these collections, imitations, exhibitions, and rehearsals are often elaborate displays of otherness. He inquires then into the relation between the representational techniques employed in rehearsals and the objects, peoples, customs that these techniques profess to display. And he investigates the relation between one kind of rehearsal—the theater—and others, such as wonder-cabinets and royal entertainments. Exemplifying the latter is the fascinating performance of Brazilian culture on the occasion of Henri II’s royal entry into Rouen: an oddly detailed simulation, repeated on successive days, not only of the exotic culture in the New World but of its destruction at the hands of French soldiers. In his analysis of this entertainment Mullaney restores to representation a strangeness and a chilling intensity which he then transfers to Shakespeare’s history plays.

If for Mullaney representation looks outward toward the exotic and the alien, for Patricia Fumerton and Joel Fineman its primary interest is inward, in the constitution of subjectivity. This subjectivity—a realm of authentic, expressive inwardness—is not the condition of certain images and poems (here Elizabethan miniatures and Shakespeare’s sonnets) but its exquisitely crafted product. Fumerton shows that the meaning of miniatures lies not only in their jewel-like images but also in the way they were kept and shown. Queen Elizabeth’s mode of possessing and displaying her miniatures is at least partly constitutive of their actual cultural significance. The way she handled the objects, whom she chose to show them to, the erotic suggestions she attached to them are not merely background; they are the objects’ *raison d’être*. This mode, Fumerton argues, the mode of a privacy at once carefully guarded and carefully performed, has suggestive implications for the sonnet as well. The strategic uses to which the cultural artifacts were put are inscribed in the artifacts themselves as their ordering principles.

Where Fumerton sees a continuum between visual images and poetic language, Fineman sees a crucial tension. For Fineman the Shakespearean subject, which provides, he argues, the model and source of virtually all subsequent poetic interiority in English, is created in the shift from a predominantly visual poetics of likeness to a predominantly verbal poetics of difference. The Shakespearean “I” finds its voice when a platonizing, homosexual imagery of praise is displaced by a sophistic and sophisticated rhetoric of heterosexual desire. Fineman’s argument, based on intense scrutiny of poetic language, seems to be at odds with the historicizing tendency of most of the articles in this collection, but it is important to grasp that he is making a bold, even extravagant, historical claim. He argues that in Shakespeare’s sonnets we are witnessing the invention, at a particular, highly charged moment in English culture, of poetic subjectivity in our language.

All subsequent attempts to speak the language of interiority will be shaped by this invention, and by extension the much-heralded deconstruction of the subject in our own time will of necessity entail a deconstruction of Shakespeare's sonnets.

The essay in this volume that in fact comes closest to a traditional formalism is Paul Alpers's "Pastoral and the Domain of Lyric in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*." It is for this reason highly revealing to note how painstakingly Alpers must work to establish the space for such formalism. He does so, as we have already briefly seen, by adducing F.W. Maitland's definition of the legal concept of *demesne*, a term "applied either to the absolute ownership of the king, or to the tenure of the person who held land to his own use, mediately or immediately from the king. . . . In every case the ultimate (free) holder, the person who *stands at the bottom of the scale*, who seems most like an owner of the land, and who *has a general right of doing what he pleases* with it, is said to hold the land in demesne." In Alpers's view Spenser, working brilliantly with traditional materials, does establish for his lyrics a literary domain, a space from within which he can criticize and judge the world around him, and in this sense have "a general right of doing what he pleases." But the very claim for such a domain at the same time acknowledges that it is subject to the power and right of the sovereign and of those intermediate authorities who stand between the poet and the sovereign. The space of literary formalism then is at once a prized *locus amoenus* and an illusion temporarily erected out of inherited literary materials and the dream of a free-hold. Formalist literary criticism must be done, if it is to be done at all, in the full awareness of the actual conditions by which an artist establishes possession of domain.

For Robert Weimann, Thomas Nashe also attempts to take some control over the space of art—"out of the constraints of a socially most precarious position, Nashe with his 'Mercuriall fingers' proudly snatched a modicum of freedom and experience"; but that attempt involves Nashe in contradictions that even his astonishing inventiveness and originality could not contain. *The Unfortunate Traveller*, Weimann argues, cracks under the strain of the conflicting discursive strategies of "poetry" and "history," and the work's failure prognosticates powerfully for the subsequent history of representation.

One of the characteristically unsettling effects of *The Unfortunate Traveller* is the noisy trumpeting of convictions that are somehow diminished by the narrator's very act of professing them. Nashe's faith has the effect of awakening a corrosive skepticism, and the flood of words used to shore up that faith only serves further to undermine its foundations. In his essay on *Coriolanus*, Stanley Cavell argues for something like the inverse of this corrosive process. Shakespeare's play is one of the bleakest in the canon; its unrelenting irony drains the tragic form of its tragic effects, and its language, by comparison with any of the playwright's great tragedies, seems to have been depleted. But it is in the staging of this "famine," Cavell argues, that Shakespeare intimates the rebirth of a community bound together in a religious faith secured by communal feeding, feeding upon

a common language. The play is not in this view incorporated into religion; rather the play intimates and initiates a spiritual communion precisely because it is, in Cavell's words, "granted the autonomy it is one's power to grant, which means, seen in its own terms." Its own terms are in effect the acknowledgment of the playwright's domain, a realm of famine that can only be relieved by a shared partaking, a cannibal feast, of language.

The Shakespeare play that seems most self-consciously concerned with the domain of art is *The Tempest*, where all the characters are isolated on an ocean island under the firm control of the magician/artist/prince Prospero. This domain is a convenient figure for what Stephen Orgel calls "the myth of a stable, accurate, authentic, *legitimate* text, a text that we can think of as Shakespeare's legitimate heir." But Prospero's claim to sole and legitimate possession of the island, Orgel observes, is secured only by a series of half-visible suppressions and evasions, and so too the myth of the text is constructed out of a convenient forgetting of the collaborative enterprise that has created the very possibility of the construction. There may be a domain of art, he argues, but it is only and always our own domain, a collective fantasy we have ourselves made rather than discovered.

The collaborative production of textual meaning is a concept one associates with reader-response criticism and hence with the work of Stanley Fish. In his contribution to this volume Fish writes on a poet, Ben Jonson, whose poems continually appeal to a community of readers: "He writes in gratitude or in petition to patrons. He writes on the occasion of the birthday of a king or prince. He writes to courtiers and to booksellers. He writes to creditors." The stage seems set then for a perfect match between a powerful critical theory and a particular type of poetry. But Fish's subject is Jonson's deliberate frustration and reversal of a collaborative enterprise based upon the poet's network of dependence. Jonson's poems begin in a position of subordination only to move toward a claim of absolute mastery. If for Spenser the literary domain is the product of a subtle negotiation with tradition and authority, if for Shakespeare it is the product of a collaborative feast of words, for Jonson it is the product of an act of controlled poetic aggression.

In Joseph Loewenstein's "The Script in the Marketplace," there is a similar emphasis on Jonson's drive toward artistic autonomy and independence, but that drive is now set in the context of the legal rights and limitations of authorship in the early seventeenth century. Jonson, in Loewenstein's account, desires "a patronage that would function as a controlled economy in which poet, not patron, regulates the marketplace"; he cannot will this utopian state into being, but he moves toward it by an extraordinary and unprecedented "investment of proprietary rhetoric" in the printed book, in plays understood not as the possession of the acting company or the bookseller but as the possession of the poet. Here the language of freehold, applied metaphorically to Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*,

begins to take on a literal approximation in the nascent concept of authorial rights.

In the essays by Christopher Pye and Janet Halley, we encounter powerful forces in the seventeenth century that seem at once to secure and subvert firm title to a literary domain. Pye's "The Sovereign, the Theater, and the Kingdome of Darknesse: Hobbes and the Spectacle of Power" argues that the aesthetic ideology of the Renaissance English theater infuses Hobbes's famous account of the terrible necessity of absolute authority. The theater is a collaborative domain, but the collaboration is one in which collective power is alienated and transferred irrevocably to the sovereign. The audience's gaze is transformed into the artificial eye of the ruler, and possession of the artistic domain is revealed to reside in a condition closely analogous to demonic possession.

Janet Halley's "Heresy, Orthodoxy, and the Politics of Religious Discourse: The Case of the English Family of Love" explores a comparable paradox, one that has a bearing on the question of literary domain even though it is centered on religious rather than aesthetic discourse. Protestant orthodoxy defines itself in opposition to a heresy whose adherents feel free to lie and mimic perfectly orthodox beliefs and practices. The consequence is not only that the radical antagonists are mutually sustaining, but that it is difficult, then as now, to know how to locate securely either orthodoxy or heresy. Everyone seems convinced that the Familists occupy a separate linguistic and theological domain, but the domain vanishes as soon as one tries to seize and define it, leaving behind a supplement of uncertainty just strong enough to undermine a confident mapping of the boundaries of orthodoxy.

With the problem of mapping, we come to the final essay in this volume, Richard Helgerson's "The Land Speaks: Cartography, Chorography, and Subversion in Renaissance England." Here the charting of the literary domain is shown to intersect directly with the literal charting of the political domain. Helgerson argues that maps and chorographic descriptions had specific ideological entailments in late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century England. Those entailments are not always and everywhere the same—there is no inherent and essential politics of mapping—but there is, Helgerson argues, no possibility of perfect instrumental neutrality. Mapping (or, for that matter, poetry) "inevitably entered into systems of relations with other representational practices, and, in doing so, altered the meaning and the authority of all the others."

Helgerson's argument directs us toward a concern in virtually all these essays with the interdependency of representational practices. It also directs us toward a further implication throughout this volume: it is not enough to ask if there is in the Renaissance such a thing as a literary domain; one must ask at the same time what the point of such an inquiry might be. What are the stakes? Who wants to know? To what end can we put our knowledge?

I might end with a final note about maps. In his study of the seventeenth



century, Sir George Clark wrote: "I have not been able to discover a case of a frontier fixed literally on a map until the year 1718."<sup>1</sup> More recently, however, historians and cartographers have detected the phenomenon much earlier; it now seems that a heightened interest in boundaries emerged in Western Europe in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. But precise marking of borders was still in its early stages; for the most part the period made do with frontier-regions rather than linear boundaries. The essays in this volume reflect in powerful ways on the aesthetic and political correlates of this cartographical situation. Boundaries seem important, but often we seem to move in an uncertain or contested region, the kind of region Ortelius in the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* of 1570 would have designated with a dotted line. When we are surveying the territory, it is important, these essays show us, to keep an eye out for the boundary stones, but, as these essays also show, we must remember that the native inhabitants could choose from time to time (provided no one was looking) to pick up the stones and move them to a different place.

—Stephen Greenblatt

1. Quoted in David Buisseret, "The Cartographic Definition of France's Eastern Boundary in the Early Seventeenth Century," in *Imago Mundi: The Journal of the International Society for the History of Cartography* 36 (1984): 72.

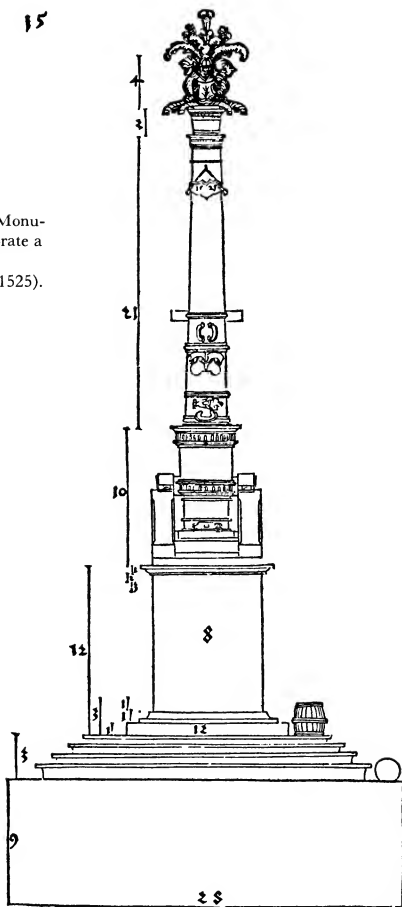
## Murdering Peasants: Status, Genre, and The Representation of Rebellion

IN 1525, determined to set his country's art on a rational footing by instructing its youth in the skills of applied geometry and perspective, Albrecht Dürer published his *Painter's Manual*, "A Manual of Measurement of Lines, Areas, and Solids by Means of Compass and Ruler." Among the detailed instructions—for the determination of the center of a circle, the construction of spirals and egg-shaped lines, the design of tile patterns, the building of a sundial, and so forth—I would like to dwell upon Dürer's plans for several civic monuments, for, as I hope to show, these plans provide a suggestive introduction to the problematic relation in the Renaissance between genre and historical experience.

Dürer's first proposal is the most straightforward and familiar: a monument to commemorate a victory. "It happens frequently," he writes, "that after a victorious battle a memorial or a column is erected at the place where the enemy was vanquished in order to commemorate the event and to inform posterity about what the enemy was like."<sup>1</sup> If the enemy was rich and powerful, Dürer notes, "some of the booty might be used for the construction of the column," as the Romans had done many centuries before. Insofar as this conception seems classical, it partakes of a cultural dream—the dream of a return to ancient dignity and glory—that extends beyond commemorative architecture. Monuments of this type not only record the achievements of the victors and remind the vanquished of their defeat but provide a proper setting for the noble actions of those who live in their shadows. As such these columns have a special appropriateness to literary tragedy, the genre that concerns itself with the actions and the destiny of rulers. Hence when imagining a stage fit for the performance of classical tragedies, Sebastiano Serlio draws a cityscape dominated by high triumphal columns.<sup>2</sup>

But Dürer's proposed column is anything but classical in design: it consists of a massive stone block which supports a ten-foot cannon of the type known as a mortar, which in turn supports a twenty-one-foot cannon surmounted by four coats of armor with high plumes (fig. 1). Is the design seriously intended or a *capriccio*? Difficult to say. Stranger memorials to military triumphs were actually erected, but Dürer's plan, which includes powder kegs and cannon balls, is slightly unsettling, as if the artist were wryly—or is it only inadvertently?—recording the triumph of military ordnance over human heroism itself. Where we might have expected coats of arms,

Fig. 1. Albrecht Dürer. "Monu-  
ment to Commemorate a  
Victory" (in *The  
Painter's Manual*, 1525).



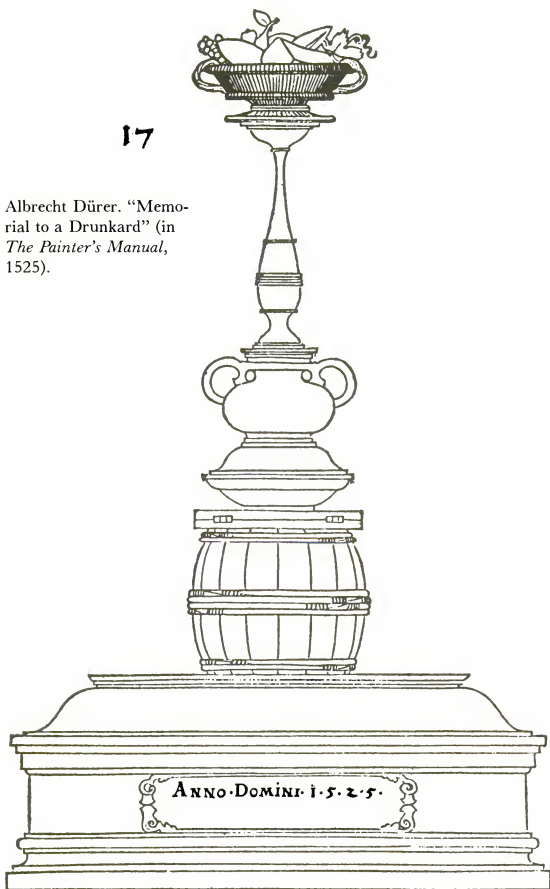
we find only coats of armor. Dürer had said that the monument should inform posterity about what the enemy was like; perhaps the enemy, as Ariosto thought, was the cannon itself.<sup>3</sup> The design, in other words, seems to generate at least the possibility of an internal distance, a gap, between the form of the monument and its ethos. From the midst of the genre of heroic commemoration, there arise doubts about the possibility of sustaining the genre in its traditional form. A victory column, like any other artistic genre, is a received collective practice, but the social conditions of this practice—both the circumstances that make the genre possible and the objects that the genre represents—may change in such a way as to undermine the form. Here the technology of modern warfare literally takes over the column and even in the act of expressing the genre makes it seem rather obsolete.

That Dürer was quite conscious of the complex generic implications of his monument is suggested by the two subsequent designs, a “Monument to Commemorate a Victory over the Rebellious Peasants” and a “Memorial to a Drunkard.” If the military monument we have just considered is the proper backdrop to a tragedy, the drunkard’s monument—which includes a beer barrel, covered by a board game, surmounted by a basket filled with bread, butter, and cheese—is obviously fit for a comedy, one where mockery and celebration (as with Falstaff) are held in delightful balance (fig. 2). The wit of this design lies not only in its mock heroic mode but in the extreme improbability of its ever being built: neither a notorious drunkard, nor his family and friends could be expected to foot the bill for such a commemoration. Once again, though now in a more pronounced and unambiguous way, the design of the commemorative column undermines the genre itself. This is quite literally a utopian project, a monument that could be built nowhere, as Dürer himself suggests when he explains that he has conceived the design *von abenteuer*, for the sake of adventure or oddity. [The Latin translation of 1532 translates “*Haec delectationis causa*,” i.e., for amusement’s sake.<sup>4</sup>]

Most interesting of all, between the heroic and mock-heroic memorials, and hence between the tragic and the comic, Dürer places the following remarkable design whose description I will quote in full:

If someone wishes to erect a victory monument after vanquishing rebellious peasants, he might use paraphernalia according to the following instructions: Place a quadrangular stone block measuring ten feet in width and four feet in height on a quadrangular stone slab which measures twenty feet in length and one foot in height. On the four corners of the ledge place tied-up cows, sheep, pigs, etc. But on the four corners of the stone block place four baskets, filled with butter, eggs, onions, and herbs, or whatever you like. In the center of this stone block place a second one, measuring seven feet in length and one foot in height. On top of this second block place a strong chest four feet high, measuring six and a half feet wide at the bottom and four feet wide at the top. Then place a kettle upside down on top of the chest. The kettle’s diameter should be four and a half feet at the rim and three feet at its bottom. Surmount the kettle with a cheese bowl which is half a foot high and two and a half feet in diameter at the bottom. Cover this bowl with a thick plate that protrudes beyond its rim. On the plate, place a keg of butter which is three feet high and has a diameter of a foot and a half

Fig. 2. Albrecht Dürer. "Memorial to a Drunkard" (in *The Painter's Manual*, 1525).



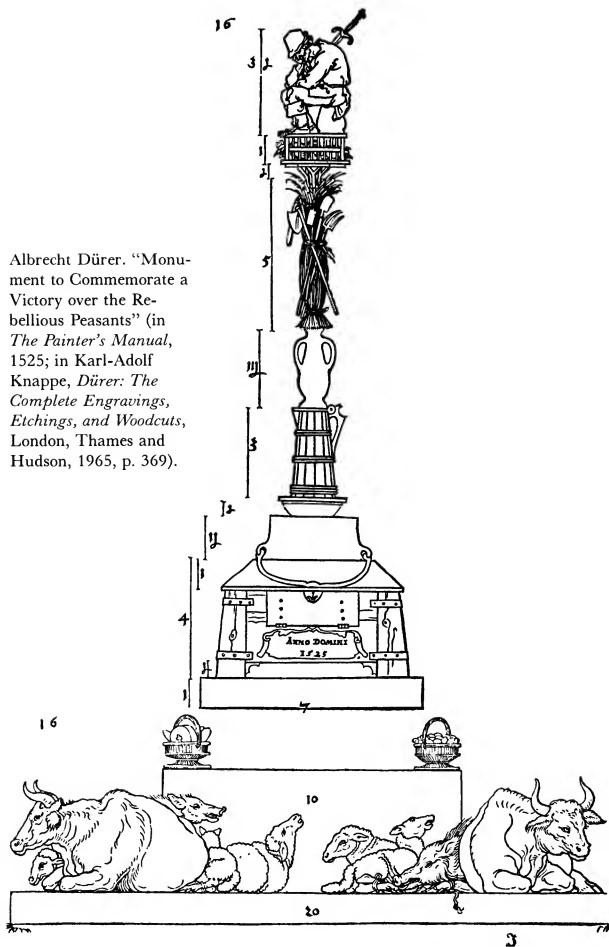
at the bottom, and of only a foot at the top. Its spout should protrude beyond this. On the top of the butter keg, place a well-formed milk jug, two and a half feet high, and with a diameter which is one foot at its bulge, half a foot at its top, and is wider at its bottom. Into this jug put four rods branching into forks on top and extending five and a half feet in height, so that the rods will protrude by half a foot, and then hang peasants' tools on it—like hoes, pitchforks, flails, etc. The rods are to be surmounted by a chicken basket, topped by a lard tub upon which sits a melancholy peasant with a sword stuck into his back. (fig. 3)

How are we to take this? To our eyes, the monument seems to be the overpowering commemoration not of a victory but of a vicious betrayal. The life-sustaining fruits of the peasant's labor are depicted in scrupulous detail—livestock, cheese, milk, butter, eggs, lard, vegetables—as are his tools, carefully bound up, in Dürer's accompanying drawing, with a sheaf of ripe grain. There, on top of it all, the peasant sits, alone, hunched over, unarmed, stabbed in the back. In his solitude, misery, and helplessness, he is the very opposite of the great ruling class nightmare in the Renaissance: the marauding horde, the many-headed multitude, the insatiate, giddy, and murderous crowd. And as there is no image of threat, so there seems to be no image of triumph: no cross rises above the defeated figure, nor does the column bear any symbol of secular order restored. Instead the column itself is composed of all that the peasant provides, while the provider is run through with a sword whose angle of entry suggests that the killer was standing above as well as behind him, in other words, that the victim was struck treacherously while sitting—resting, perhaps, after his labor.

In sixteenth-century German art there is, of course, one supreme figure of tragic betrayal, and it is precisely this figure that Dürer's drawing evokes: the seated peasant, with his left arm wearily resting on his left thigh and his right arm supporting his drooping head, is closely modelled on the iconographic type known as "Christ in Distress." Dürer himself used this figure on the title page of the *Little Passion* (1511; fig. 4), and there is a moving example in limewood by Hans Leinberger (fig. 5), possibly dating from the year of the *Painter's Manual*. If one dressed Leinberger's bleeding Christ in tattered clothes and substituted a soft cap for the crown of thorns, one would have almost exactly Dürer's image of the murdered peasant.<sup>5</sup>

This is the historical monument that cries out to be built but that never gets built because only the victors pay for monuments: it must remain a sketch, a design in a painter's manual, a dark fantasy. The sketch can speak bitterly about more than one period in the history of the European peasantry, but in 1525, in Germany, it refers overwhelmingly to a single, cataclysmic event, then near its bloody close: the Peasants' War. In 1524 and 1525 thousands of peasants and artisans rebelled throughout Swabia, Franconia, and Thuringia. Aroused in part by the struggle of both spiritual and temporal rulers in Germany to free themselves from servitude to Rome, the peasants determined to free themselves from their own servitude. They attacked crucial elements of the existing social, religious, and political system and set about to transform the whole agrarian order. The famous Twelve Articles of the

Fig. 3. Albrecht Dürer. "Monu-  
ment to Commemorate a  
Victory over the Re-  
bellious Peasants" (in  
*The Painter's Manual*,  
1525; in Karl-Adolf  
Knappe, *Dürer: The  
Complete Engravings,  
Etchings, and Woodcuts*,  
London, Thames and  
Hudson, 1965, p. 369).



Upper Swabian peasants demanded that the entire community have the power to choose a pastor, that their tithes be distributed to the poor and needy in the same villages in which these tithes were collected, that they be allowed to hunt, fish, and gather wood, that rents be regulated and the death tax abolished, that enclosures of common fields be stopped. Above all, as Luther had proclaimed that Christ had purchased with his own blood the freedom of all Christians, so the peasants proclaimed that they would no longer be owned as property and demanded the abolition of serfdom and the feudal *corvée*.<sup>6</sup>

Though he seemed at moments to sympathize with many of these demands, Luther quickly spoke out against the rebels. "You assert that no one is to be the serf of anyone else," he writes to his "dear friends," the peasants, "because Christ has made us all free. That is making Christian freedom a completely physical matter. Did not Abraham and other patriarchs and prophets have slaves? Read what St. Paul teaches about servants, who, at that time, were all slaves."<sup>7</sup> When the peasants persisted in confusing spiritual and worldly freedom, collapsing the crucial distinction between the Two Kingdoms, Luther wrote in 1525 his notorious pamphlet "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants." The rebels, he declares, are the agents of the devil, and their revolt is a prelude to the destruction of the world: "Therefore let everyone who can, smite, slay, and stab, secretly or openly, remembering that nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful, or devilish than a rebel."<sup>8</sup>

We may assume that the German princes—who saw to it that over 100,000 peasants were slaughtered in the crushing of the rebellion and its aftermath—did not greatly need Luther's encouragement, but they enthusiastically cited his treatise and may, for all we know, have found genuine spiritual consolation in it. "These are strange times," Luther declares, "when a prince can win heaven with bloodshed better than other men with prayer!"<sup>9</sup> As for the rebel peasants and their sympathizers, those who survived bitterly accused Luther of betraying them. And it is a sense of betrayal, we have said, that suffuses Dürer's monument.

But it is precisely here, at the moment we begin to flesh out the historical situation, that our understanding of Dürer's sketch begins to encounter obstacles. For while it is possible that certain of his associates were sympathetic with the peasants' cause,<sup>10</sup> there are no comparable indications of solidarity, overt or covert, elsewhere in Dürer's art or writings. "Dürer never wavered for a moment in his loyalty to Luther," Panofsky claims,<sup>11</sup> and there is evidence, in a remarkable pen and watercolor sketch done in the year of the *Painter's Manual*, that at the time of the Peasants' War Dürer shared Luther's fear of an impending apocalypse (fig. 6). Dürer writes under the drawing:

In the year 1525, on the night between the Wednesday and Thursday after Whitsun, I dreamed that I saw four great columns of water descending from heaven. The first fell most furiously, with a dreadful noise, about four miles away from me, and flooded all the countryside. I was so terrified by it that I woke. Then the others fell. They were very great.



# Passionis domini ielu- crificium figuris



Fig. 4. Left: Albrecht Dürer. "The Man of Sorrows Seated" (title page; proof, 1st state) from *The Little Passion*, 1511; in Karl-Adolf Knappe, *Dürer: The Complete Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1965, p. 254.

Fig. 5. Right: Hans Leinberger. "Christ in Distress," ca. 1525 (in Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany, 1475–1525*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1980, plate 99).

Sometimes they fell far off, sometimes near. And they descended from such a height that they seemed to fall slowly. The falls were accompanied by so much wind and flying spray that when I awakened my whole body still shook with fear. It was long before I regained my equanimity. On rising in the morning I painted what I had seen. May God mend all.<sup>12</sup>

At the height of the Peasants' War and haunted by such hallucinatory fears of apocalyptic inundation, Dürer could have taken pleasure, unmixed by sympathy or ambivalence, in imagining a monument to commemorate victory over rebellious peasants. What we took for almost self-evident marks of betrayal would, in such a mood, be the details of a wish-fulfillment fantasy: the terrifying mobs have been shattered into defenseless individuals like the unarmed peasant; the rebel no longer demands anything but sits in melancholy resignation to his fate; and that fate is justly represented by the sword. "Now look!" exclaims Luther, "A rebel is a man who runs at his head and lord with a naked sword. No one should wait, then, until his lord commands him to defend him, but the first person who can, ought to take

the initiative and run in and stab the rascal, and not worry about committing murder." And as if he too were thinking about designing a monument to commemorate such an act, Luther remarks that in the kingdom of the world—that is, in the kingdom of God's judgments upon the wicked—the appropriate "tool is not a wreath of roses or a flower of love, but a naked sword; and a sword is a symbol of wrath, severity, and punishment."<sup>13</sup>

If Dürer's design was conceived in the spirit of Luther's remarks—and I think it probable that it was—then the artist did not intend to represent the betrayal of the peasants. On the contrary, we may say that the monument actually participates in that betrayal. The bitter irony we initially perceived was constituted less by concrete evidence of Dürer's subversiveness than by our own sympathy for the peasants, sympathy conditioned by our century's ideology, by recent historical scholarship, and, no doubt above all, by our safe distance from the fear and loathing of 1525. But this acknowledgement, though necessary, seems inadequate, for our solidarity with early sixteenth-century German peasants is of interest only insofar as it seems to have been called forth by Dürer's monument and not simply read into it. The question then is how Dürer could have created a brilliant, detailed, and coherent design that could lend itself to a strong interpretation so much at odds with his own probable intentions, a design that has become in effect two quite different monuments.

Our interpretive strategy here must not be to disclaim our response as anachronistic: there were those in 1525 who could have seen in Dürer's design precisely what we initially saw in it. Still less should we attempt, in the name of a "correct" response, to put aside sympathy for the peasants and recreate in ourselves the murderous loathing that probably inspired the monument. Rather we should try to understand more fully the historical and aesthetic contingencies that led to the making of this odd and disturbing design. Here we must return not to Dürer's own feelings but to the resources and the pressures of genre. The generic situation will lead us to the elements in Dürer's work that occasion both its radical discontinuity in relation to ourselves—and hence make possible the transvaluation of interpretation—and its continuity. If the latter is less striking than the former—if indeed it seems all but invisible—it nonetheless makes possible the sense of strangeness, even exhilaration, that arises from our recognition of the reversal of meaning. For it is the survival into the late twentieth century of the commemorative mode—our continued need to represent "historic" events, to construct monuments in public spaces, to attach plaques to buildings and erect markers by the roadside—that makes the vicissitudes of Dürer's design available at all as a significant subject.<sup>14</sup>

Let us recall that in the *Painter's Manual* the monument we have been considering is situated between the high heroic tribute to military victory and the mock-heroic celebration of the drunkard, the former suited to tragedy and the latter to comedy. What does the intermediate position signify? I suggest that a monument to celebrate a victory over rebellious peasants created a genre problem, a problem to which Dürer was particularly sensitive since he had already, as we have seen, enter-

tained playful doubts about the more conventional victory monument. Indeed Dürer may have thought up the problem as well as undertaken a solution to it because his was a book about problem-solving: the design takes its place alongside such questions as how to interlace two solids of the same size so that in each case one point pierces the corresponding surface of the second solid.<sup>15</sup>

A victory over rebellious peasants calls for a commemorative column—after all, the fate of worldly rule, that is human civilization itself, depends upon this struggle—and yet the enemy is an object of contempt and derision. The princes and nobles for whom such monuments were built could derive no dignity from the triumph, any more than they could derive dignity from killing a mad dog. A heroic encounter is a struggle for honor and must conform to the code which requires that the combatants be of roughly equal station. This requirement does not originate in some rudimentary sense of “fair play” but rather in the symbolic economics of appropriation suggested by the Church of England hymn: “Conquering Kings their titles take / From the foes they captive make.”<sup>16</sup> “I better brook the loss of brittle life,” gasps the

Fig. 6. Albrecht Dürer. “Vision of an Inundation,” 1525. Watercolor and manuscript. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.



defeated Hotspur to Hal, "than those proud titles thou hast won of me" (*I Henry IV*, 5.4.78-79). But the peasants, of course, have no titles to seize, and can yield up no trophies fit to adorn the victor's monument. Indeed, in the economy of honor they are not simply a cipher but a deficit, since even a defeat at the hands of a prince threatens to confer upon them some of the prince's store of honor, while what remains of the victorious prince's store can be tarnished by the unworthy encounter.

Dürer then cannot dignify the peasants in his design by representing them as worthy enemies, nor can he include an image of the triumphant nobleman, for the image could only be tarnished by such a base encounter. He could, I suppose, have chosen more symbolic modes of representation, such as Hercules slaying the Hydra, but by doing so he would have robbed his design of its wit, its sense of problem-solving. Dürer had in the surrounding monuments committed himself to a kind of commemorative realism: the victory column composed of cannons, the drunkard's of food and drink. To have abandoned the mode in the peasant's column would, in effect, have signalled the defeat of his art at the hands of history itself.

Instead Dürer depicts a peasant, but one utterly without signs of honor; he has been killed in battle perhaps, but it may as well have been in an abattoir. The victor is spared representation, and even his sword is untainted, for it has not *encountered* a base adversary (which would imply face-to-face combat) but has *overtaken* him from behind. In a culture sensitive to the semiotics of execution, the weapon's position would not have gone unnoticed.<sup>17</sup>

So extreme a humiliation of a single, unarmed man is difficult to represent, however, without evoking Christ and hence risking semiotic contamination of the entire commemorative exercise. Dürer heightens this risk, as we have seen, by directly modelling his defeated peasant on the iconographic type of Christ in Distress. This aesthetic decision may signal a deep ambivalence on Dürer's part, a secret, subversive sympathy with the vanquished encoded at the very pinnacle of the victor's monument. I do not think we can rule out this possibility, one that satisfies a perennial longing since Romanticism to discover that all great artists have allied themselves, if only indirectly or unconsciously, with the oppressed and revolutionary masses.<sup>18</sup> What is poignant and powerful about Dürer's design is that the identical signs can be interpreted as signifying both the radical irony of personal dissent and the harsh celebration of official order. This uncanny convergence is not, I would suggest, the theoretical condition of *all* signs, but the contingent condition of certain signs at particular historical moments, moments in which the ruling elite, deeply threatened, conjures up images of repression so harsh that they can double as images of protest.

It is all too easy for us to perceive the possibility of ironic dissent in Dürer's sketch; the difficult task is to perceive the celebration of order. Thus the allusion to Christ in Distress at first seems unambiguously sympathetic to the peasants, but Dürer may have chosen the iconographic type because it conveyed more powerfully

than any other image of the body available in his culture a mood of utter forsakenness, desolation, and helplessness. He may have expected his audience to register this mood without concluding that the peasants were Christlike in innocence or ultimately destined to triumph over their tormentors. More precisely, he may have felt that the manifest purpose of the monument itself, the peasant dress, and above all the sword in the back would abruptly check any drift toward a perception of the vanquished as the scourged Christ and would leave the viewer with only the potent representation of defeat.

This strategy depends, to be sure, upon the drastic splitting of a traditional representation—the leaching-out of the sublime innocence of Christ from the imagery of battered, weary mourning. But it is by comparable strategies that the whole design is governed: thus, as we have seen, Dürer sustains the honor code paradoxically by reversing or cancelling its principal elements. Here too there is a risk: the reversal or cancellation of the monument's genre. Far from avoiding this consequence, Dürer's strategy is to embrace it: insofar as the victory monument suggests epic and tragedy, he endows it, by composing the column of livestock, farm produce, and tools, with the signs of pastoral and georgic and the implications of comedy. The compositional elements have in addition a probable topical reference, for the peasant's labor was a principal issue in the revolt. With the dead rebel at the top of the column, the grain may suggest the violent reaffirmation of the *corvée* system, while the cattle at the base may imply something akin to Luther's observation that instead of rising up in revolt, the peasants hereafter should thank God if they have to give up only one cow to enjoy the other cow in peace.<sup>19</sup>

The broader generic implications here are as important as any topical reference. The pastoral and georgic elements from which the column is composed function as signs of the pacification of the peasants, a pacification whose principal means is graphically depicted at the top, and of their vulnerability and lowliness, their social distance from the armed defenders of order. (I am reminded of the Fascist inscription still—or once again—visible beneath the whitewash in Italian villages: "The plough furrows the land, but the sword defends it.") The comic implications arise from the incongruous inclusion of pastoral and georgic elements on a victory column, just as the humor of the drunkard's memorial consists in the solemn public representation of the board game, drinking bowls, and bread basket. The lard tub, butter churn, chicken basket and the like do not in this context suggest the centrality and importance of agricultural production but rather the producer's outlandishness, a marginality that insures that no honor will accrue to the defeated peasant.

If pastoral, georgic, and comedy are both the logical outcome and the cancellation of the monument's heroic and tragic codes when they are applied to rebellious peasants, Dürer's design provokes a reciprocal cancellation: neither the celebration of leisure nor the celebration of labor survives the sword thrust in the peasant's back, and the laughter that the monument generates is baffled in the instant it bursts forth. For, even as the occasion banishes the normal symbolism of heroic commemoration,

the very form of the monument precludes genuinely comic treatment by continuing to insist upon the tragic and epic dimensions of the victory.

Such then are the interlocking pressures of history on genre and of generic conventions on historical representation: a victory thought to be of world-historical importance is commemorated in a column in which the enemy is reduced to impotent absurdity, while the victor is entirely effaced. Dürer cleverly solves the generic problems posed by the historical circumstances of the representation only by creating a design that risks collapse into its own antithesis. That collapse has, in fact, by now fully occurred, so that we can recover Dürer's probable intentions only by setting aside the manifest and "self-evident" imagery of betrayal. That imagery does not vanish altogether; instead, it is self-consciously repressed, in an interpretive strategy comparable to the repression for which Luther called, when he advised his readers to set aside all sympathy for the peasants: "There is no place for patience or mercy. This is the time of the sword, not the day of grace."<sup>20</sup> Given the peculiarities of Dürer's surrounding designs—a victory column that unsettles the ethos of the victory column itself and a commemorative pillar that humorously mocks the man it professes to honor—it may be that Dürer was wittily conscious of the need for this reinterpretation. The risk would have seemed less grave in a country still in the grip of intense fear and class hatred; readers would be inclined to interpret the monument correctly, and the stifling of sympathy would be a small, aestheticized model of the larger and more compelling historical task. The symbolism of betrayal, generated by the historical pressures on the generic codes, could be recuperated ideologically as a type of "false consciousness," a sentimental attitudinizing that must be overcome if the rebellious peasants are to be defeated and if that defeat is to be properly celebrated.

We have constructed then a reading of Dürer's design based upon the complex interplay of three forces: the artist's intention, genre, and the historical situation. By the latter I mean both the particular objects of representation and the specific structure of ideology and event that renders something—person, place, institution, thing, idea, or action—sufficiently notable to be represented. Neither intention nor genre can be reduced to this historical situation: a given genre, as Dürer's design powerfully demonstrates, may have great difficulty accommodating a particular representational object, and artistic intention has an arsenal of strategies—including irony, laughter, open revolt, and subversive submission, to name but a few—designed to differentiate it from the surrounding world. But this differentiation is not the same as autonomy, and the most important lesson to be learned from our discussion of Dürer's design is that intention and genre are as social, contingent, and ideological, as the historical situation they combine to represent. The genre of the monument is no more neutral and timeless than the Peasants' War, and Dürer's artistic intentions, as we have been able to reconstruct them, express a specific mode of engagement with the people and events to which his design refers.

If intention, genre, and historical situation are all equally social and ideological,

they by no means constitute a single socio-ideological "language." On the contrary, as Dürer's design suggests, they are, in effect, separate forces that may jostle, enter into alliance, or struggle fiercely with one another.<sup>21</sup> What they cannot do, once they are engaged in a living work of art, is to be neutral—"pure," free-floating signifiers—for they are already, by their very existence, specific points of view on the world. As such they make demands upon us, as we do upon them: hence the possibility we have already encountered in response to the peasant monument that our own intentions may appropriate the work and transform its meaning. Dürer's design helps us see that what is at stake in interpretation is never simply a passive submission to the pure and unitary original meaning of a work of art. The production and consumption of such works are not unitary to begin with; they always involve a multiplicity of interests, however well organized, for the crucial reason that art is social and hence presumes more than one consciousness. And in response to the art of the past, we inevitably register, whether we wish to or not, the shifts in value and interest that are produced in the struggles of social and political life.

I want to turn now from early sixteenth-century Germany to late sixteenth-century England and look briefly at several different artists encountering a genre problem closely comparable to Dürer's, for concentration on a single artist tends to conceal the range of "solutions" generated in response to historical pressures on generic codes. The pressure in this case was not a Peasants' War but the unrest and class hostility that afflicted England sporadically throughout Elizabeth's reign. Inflation, unemployment, and periodic bad harvests, along with continuing religious and political differences, led to a series of disturbances that alarmed the propertied class. The depth of this alarm has been somewhat obscured by the fact that there was no major conflagration, nothing comparable to the Armada, the conspiracies surrounding Mary Queen of Scots, or Essex's abortive rebellion, and hence little that could leave a mark upon the great chronicles of the realm. But the patient work of local historians has revealed an official concern sufficiently intense and widespread as to constitute something like a national preoccupation.

For Essex alone, Emmison has culled a substantial number of cases of alleged sedition that came before the Quarter Sessions and Assizes. When the accused appeared to have been idly boasting or ranting in his cups, the judges could be relatively lenient, though it is noteworthy that even in such cases charges were actually brought and investigated. Thus in 1591 John Feltwell, a laborer of Great Wenden, was pilloried for having declared that "The Queen is but a woman and ruled by noblemen, and the noblemen and gentlemen are all one, and the gentlemen and farmers will hold together so that the poor can get nothing."<sup>22</sup> Feltwell's dark talk of a rising to make the world "merry" again was clearly regarded as so much wind, noxious but not a serious threat to anyone. When, however, the talk was not isolated, when, in a season of discontent, there were signs of collaboration, the official

response was ferocious. "We can get no work," Edward White, woolen-weaver, was alleged to have said in 1566, "nor we have no money, and if we should steal we should be hanged, and if we should ask, no man would give us, but we will have a remedy one of these days, or else we will lose all, for the commons will rise, we know not how soon, for we look for it every hour. Then will up two or three thousand in Colchester and about Colchester, and we look for it every day, for there is no more to do but one to ride on a horse with a clap and cry, 'They are up, they are up!', and another to ring 'Awake,' for ye shall see the hottest harvest that ever was in England."<sup>23</sup> White and three fellow workers who had spoken similarly were hanged.

"The poor hate the rich," wrote Deloney in 1597, "because they will not set them on work; and the rich hate the poor, because they seem burdensome."<sup>24</sup> It is in the context of this hatred, and of its ally, fear, that we must attempt to understand the frequent representations in Elizabethan literature of the victory of the forces of property, order, and true religion over the many-headed monster. These representations rarely depict the actual method most often used to punish those whom the magistrates deemed serious threats: the thousands of hangings carried out locally throughout Tudor and Stuart England. Instead of depicting the ordinary operation of the law, functioning to defend property, English artists most often narrate events at once more menacing and more socially prestigious, events colored by the feudal fantasies in which the sixteenth-century gentry dressed their craving for honor.<sup>25</sup> Thus instead of the assizes and a hempen rope, we have tales of mass rebellion and knightly victories. But the victories are not commemorated with the heroic solemnity normally associated with the Indian summer of English chivalry; they echo instead with a strange laughter—not belly laughter, not even the laughter that accompanies a sudden release from menace, but a taut, cruel laughter that is at once perfectly calculated and, as in a nightmare, out of control. A passage from Sidney's "New" *Arcadia*, the version revised in the early 1580s, will serve as an example. Disguised as the Amazon Zelmane and the shepherd Dorus, the two young princes, Pyrocles and Mucidorus, are fighting against "an unruly sort of clowns and other rebels" who have risen up against foolish, ineffectual, but legitimate King Basilius. The "mad multitude" forces the royal party to retreat, in the course of which the heroes deftly dispatch a number of the churls. A sample of Sidney's manner follows:

"O," said a miller that was half drunk, "see the luck of a good-fellow" and with that word ran with a pitchfork at Dorus; but the nimbleness of the wine carried his head so fast that it made it over-run his feet, so that he fell withal just between the legs of Dorus, who, setting his foot on his neck (though he offered two milch kine and four fat hogs for his life) thrust his sword quite through from one ear to the other; which took it very unkindly, to feel such news before they heard of them, instead of hearing, to be put to such feeling. But Dorus, leaving the miller to vomit his soul out in wine and blood, with his two-hand sword strake off another quite by the waist who the night before had dreamed he was grown a couple, and, interpreting it that he should be married, had bragged of his dream that morning among his neighbours. But that blow astonished quite a poor painter who stood by with a pike in his hands.



This painter was to counterfeit the skirmish between the Centaurs and Lapithes, and had been very desirous to see some notable wounds, to be able the more lively to express them; and this morning, being carried by the stream of this company, the foolish fellow was even delighted to see the effect of blows. But this last, happening near him, so amazed him that he stood stock still, while Dorus, with a turn of his sword, strake off both his hands. And so the painter returned well skilled in wounds, but with never a hand to perform his skill.<sup>26</sup>

Hatred and fear of rebellion from below have many voices; why should they adopt this particular tone in this particular work? Why should Sidney, sensitive, generous, and idealistic, choose to depict the heroes of his romance in this grotesque and lurid light? In part the explanation lies in certain recurrent features of Sidney's style and in his personal circumstances: the aggression that frequently makes itself felt in his writing, the impression of anxiety masquerading as forced high spirits, the frustrations in his political career and his longing for decisive action, even the fact that Penshurst, where *Arcadia* was written and revised, was itself the result of early sixteenth-century enclosures bitterly resisted and resented by the poor.<sup>27</sup> These factors are important in any attempt to understand Sidney's tone, but they are insufficiently *conscious* to account by themselves for his intentions and insufficiently *public* to account for the broad appeal of his work.

Though it was not published during his lifetime, shortly after Sidney's death *Arcadia* became one of the most celebrated literary achievements of the age, the work that expressed more than any other the whole ethos of the English aristocracy and of those—and they were a great part of the entire propertied class—who fashioned themselves after that ethos.

What then is the public basis of a passage such as the one I have just quoted? What social and aesthetic problems does Sidney's grotesque comedy attempt to solve? The answer, I suggest, lies in the aesthetically codified stock of social knowledge, that is, in genre, and we may begin by noting certain similarities between Sidney's account of his heroes' victory over the "mad multitude" and Dürer's plan for a monument to commemorate a victory over rebellious peasants. In both there is a conspicuous insistence upon objects that would normally have no place in a battle; and in both an exaggerated representation of the vulnerability of the social inferiors. Dürer's monument protects the social status of the victors by effacing them entirely, leaving only the avenging sword; Sidney cannot, of course, similarly protect his heroes whose presence is essential to the narrative, but the romance tradition provides the means for a partial effacement through disguise. As the shepherd Dorus and the Amazon Zelmane—disguises conspicuously marginal in class and gender—Musi-dorus and Pyrocles do not have their princely honor compromised by a skirmish with unruly clowns. We may, of course, observe that their honor was already compromised by the disguise itself—and elsewhere in his work Sidney makes much of the potential stain of a masquerade brought about by the power of love—but paradoxically the heroes' victory over the peasants at least partially restores the honor

tarnished by their disguise, while their disguise protects the honor that would otherwise have been tarnished by such a victory.

Like the anonymous sword in Dürer's design, the heroes' disguise in *Arcadia* also functions to deprive the defeated peasants of any honor that might accrue to them from the social distinction of the victors. And like Dürer, Sidney carefully reinforces the boundaries of the honor code by means of cruel laughter: the livestock at the base of the victory column and the lard tub at its top find their narrative equivalent in the miller's offer of "two milch kine and four fat hogs for his life" and in the grotesquely comic appropriateness of each act of violence. Peasants are, of course, a staple of laughter in Renaissance art, but it is important to distinguish between a laughter that levels—that draws lord and clown together in the shared condition of the flesh—and a laughter that attempts to inscribe ineradicable differences.<sup>28</sup> Laughter in an artist like Rabelais affirms the oneness of the body with the earth and celebrates the crossing or destruction of boundaries; Sidneian laughter, by contrast, draws sharp distinctions: only the others, the defeated boors, are returned to the earth, while the noble victors soar above it: "Zelmane made them perceive the odds between an eagle and a kite, with such a nimble steadiness and such an assured nimbleness that while one was running back for fear, his fellow had her sword in his guts"(379). In the context of a battle, the rebels' occupations are for Sidney inherently ridiculous, and their fates are made to match not their misdeeds so much as their social absurdity. A "dapper fellow, a tailor by occupation" and "suitor to a seamster's daughter," has his nose struck off and stoops down "because he had heard that if it were fresh put to, it would cleave on again. But as his hand was on the ground to bring his nose to his head, Zelmane with a blow sent his head to his nose" (380). If we recall that the handsome princes are suitors to the king's daughters, we can savor to the full the social differentiation charted by such comic violence.

The climax of this episode, and of Sidney's strategy of marking status boundaries, is the mutilation of the "poor painter," and it is here that we can most clearly observe Sidney, like Dürer, confronting the principal danger of this particular representational enterprise: the inadvertent staining of the noble victors and the ennobling of the base vanquished. The danger then is the effacement or, alternatively, the redrawing of boundaries, so that we perceive resemblance instead of difference or betrayal instead of victory. The safest way to avoid this unsettling of the fixed ratios of praise and blame is literally to dehumanize the rebels, thereby allowing them no hint of a resemblance to either the victors or the artist himself. But Dürer, let us recall, did not turn away from the sympathetic rendering of the peasant that threatened to invalidate the purpose of his monument. Rather, in an act of aesthetic bravado, he embraced the threat, facing it down by representing it. Here, similarly, in the midst of his depiction of the skirmish, Sidney introduces an artist on the side of—or at least in the orbit of—the rebels, a lower-class artist then who is setting about to depict just such a skirmish. The resemblance between Sidney and the poor

painter would seem to be heightened by the painter's theme—the battle between the Centaurs and the Lapiths—since this favorite subject of Renaissance iconography is used by several of the *Arcadia's* literary sources to describe exactly the type of disorder that Sidney himself is depicting.<sup>29</sup>

But what threat would such an imaged resemblance represent? The threat of a status loss to Sidney himself equivalent to that which threatens his disguised heroes. The fear of such a loss haunts many of Sidney's literary works, never more so perhaps than in the rhetorical urgencies and ironies of the *Defense of Poetry*. Here in *Arcadia*, a work composed in the enforced idleness of a humiliating rustication at the hands of the displeased Queen, Sidney mirrors himself as a useless idler on the field of battle, one who has fallen from the high heroic vocation to which he was born to the marginal status of a foolish artisan,<sup>30</sup> and then having let the image stand for a moment, he mutilates it: "Dorus, with a turn of his sword, strake off both his hands. And so the painter returned well skilled in wounds, but with never a hand to perform his skill." In the grim, tight-lipped laughter that such a passage seeks to provoke, Sidney reaffirms the social and aesthetic differences that the representation itself would seem to call into question: in effect, he attacks the professional as opposed to the amateur, cutting the hands off the artist who would allow himself to drift toward solidarity with the rebels—the painter stood by "with a pike in his hands"—and blocking an art that might, through this solidarity, compromise the comic mode in which the killing of tailors, millers, butchers, and poor painters should be represented.<sup>31</sup>

Having thus by means of violence reestablished threatened boundaries, the *Arcadia* goes on to attribute the defeat of the uprising not to the power of the sword but to the power of the word. The sword is inadequate because of the size of the multitude: the "very killing," Sidney writes, begins to weary the princes who fear "lest in long fight they should be conquered with conquering" (380). Sidney then acknowledges the inability of superior force alone to protect rulers against a popular rebellion; the heroes' military prowess suffices only to enable them and the royal party to withdraw from the open country, where they are fully exposed to rebel attack, to the slightly greater security of the princely lodge. This withdrawal quite literally images the reaffirmation of status boundaries—the royal party is now walled off from the surrounding populace—but the boundaries are vulnerable to attack: the rebels "went about with pickaxe to the wall and fire to the gate to get themselves entrance" (381).

Faced with the limitations of both offensive and defensive military strategy, Sidney's heroes turn to what for Renaissance humanists was the original and ultimate prop of the social order: rhetoric.<sup>32</sup> Pyrocles, in his disguise as Zelmane, bravely issues forth from the lodge, quickly ascends to the nearby judgment-seat of the prince, and signals that he wishes to make a speech. The multitude, at first unwilling to listen, is quieted by one of the rebel leaders, a young farmer who "was caught in a little affection towards Zelmane" (382). Unlike the more sanguine humanists,

Sidney does not pretend that, through the magical power of its tropes, Zelmane's speech is able to pacify the crowd; rather its cunning rhetoric, piercing "the rugged wilderness of their imaginations" (386), reawakens the rebels' dormant divisions of economic, political, and social interest:

For the artisans, they would have corn and wine set at a lower price, and bound to be kept so still; the ploughmen, vine-labourers and farmers would none of that. The countrymen demanded that every man might be free in the chief towns: that could not the burgesses like of. The peasants would have all the gentlemen destroyed; the citizens (especially such as cooks, barbers, and those other that lived most on gentlemen) would but have them reformed (383).

Before long the crowd falls apart, "each one killing him that was next for fear he should do as much to him" (388), and with only a small additional intervention by the royal party, the rebellion is crushed. The young farmer, we might add, is killed in a final, parenthetical touch of the comic violence that secures status boundaries and drives the rebels to the "frontiers":

But then came down Zelmane, and Basilius with Dorus issued; and . . . made such havoc (among the rest Zelmane striking the farmer to the heart with her sword, as before she had done with her eyes) that in a while they of the contrary side were put to flight and fled to certain woods upon the frontiers, where feeding wildly and drinking only water, they were disciplined for their drunken riots (389).

Sidney's solution to the problem of representing a victory over a popular rebellion is a brilliant one, but it depends, as we have seen, upon the disguise of the aristocratic heroes, a disguise whose stain to their princely honor is only partially washed away by the rebels' blood. If we turn from *Arcadia* to the other massive achievement of late sixteenth-century English literature, *The Faerie Queene*, we encounter an alternative solution that manages, unlike Dürer, to represent the victor and, unlike Sidney, to represent him *in propria persona*. In Canto 2 of Book 5—printed in 1596, three years after the posthumous publication of Sidney's work—Spenser's hero Artegall, the champion of Justice, and his companion, the iron man Talus, come upon an immense crowd assembled to listen to a "mighty Gyant." The giant—"admired much of fooles, women, and boys"—stands on a rock overlooking the sea and boasts that with a "huge great paire of ballance in his hand," he will weigh all the world and reduce everything to its original state of equality. The vulgar flock about him "like foolish flies about an hony crocke," in hopes of obtaining "vncontrolled freedom":

All which when *Artegall* did see, and heare,  
How he mis-led the simple peoples traine,  
In sdeignfull wize he drew vnto him neare.<sup>33</sup>

Spenser's hero thus retains his proper shape and name, as he advances to confront the nameless giant. By representing the radical leader as literally monstrous—for in faery land, of course, such grotesqueries need not appear merely the figurative

excesses of political rhetoric—Spenser greatly reduces the threat of an inadvertent ennobling of rebellion in the commemoration of its defeat. The giant bears in the form of his body the ineradicable sign of his disobedience, a sign that links him to the primal disobedience of the giants who rebelled against Jove and hence, by traditional mythographic analogy, to the rebel angels of the Christian story. These associations would seem to call for the hero to attack, just as, earlier in the same Canto, he had destroyed the mighty Saracen *Pollente* and as, at the book's close, he beheads the giant Grantorto. Such warfare is a crucial and recurrent structural principle in Spenser's epic which rests on the chivalric conviction, congenial to militant Protestantism, that acts of violence against evil oppressors are necessary, inevitable, and redemptive. But the Giant in Canto 2 is not an extorter or oppressor; rather he bears, in the huge balances and in his project of restoring all things to their just and ancient proportions, signs that link him to Artegall himself and to Astraea who taught the knight, as Spenser writes, "to weigh both right and wrong / In equall ballance" (V. i.7). And just at the point when the hero seems to be girding himself for battle—"In sdeignfull wize he drew vnto him neare"—he turns instead to rhetoric: "And thus vnto him spake, without regard or fear" (V.ii.33).

Artegall's purpose in the debate that follows is clearly to discredit the Giant, to expose the fraudulence of his claims, and hence to distinguish firmly between the demonic parody of social justice and the true exercise of justice embodied in Artegall's own knightly vocation. But the distinction is achieved paradoxically by the poem's insistence now not on the uncanny resemblance between the Giant's iconographic sign and Artegall's, but on the still more uncanny resemblance between the Giant's rhetoric and Spenser's own. Artegall declares that the egalitarian social project is belied by the absolute stability of the geocentric cosmos:

The earth was in the middle centre pight,  
In which it doth immoueable abide,  
Hemd in with waters like a wall in sight;  
And they with aire, that not a drop can slide:  
Al which the heauens containe, and in their courses guide.

Such heauenly iustice doth among them raine,  
That euery one doe know their certaine bound,  
In which they doe these many yeares remaine,  
And mongst them al no change hath yet beene found.

(35–36)

This stability—the perfection of objects "hemd in" and "bound"—is decisive evidence of God's absolute power and hence of the need for all creatures, men as well as planets, to submit passively to the divine will: "He maketh Kings to sit in souerainty; / He maketh subjects to their powre obay" (41). The Giant indignantly appeals to the signs of vast observable change both in the physical universe and in the social order—

Seest not, how badly all things present bee,  
And each estate quite out of order goth?—  
(37)

to which Artegall replies with a blend of challenges reminiscent of the Book of Job and arguments for the transcendent orderliness and ultimate self-cancellation of all change. But these arguments, though fully sanctioned by the outcome of the episode, are curiously at odds with the poet's own perceptions, in the proem to Book 5, which seem to accord far more with the Giant's:

Me seemes the world is runne quite out of square,  
From the first point of his appointed sourse,  
And being once amisse growes daily wourse and wourse.  
(V.Pr.1)

How are we to account for this likeness and how then are we to explain the contradiction between the positive value attached to the poet's own account of disorder and the negative value attached to the Giant's quite similar account? The likeness, we may suggest, derives from the critical, even apocalyptic, strain that is recurrent in Spenser's work, from his awareness of deep disorder in the human and natural realms, from his nagging sense of social marginality, whether in relation to the Spencers of Althorpe or to the court, and from his powerful conception of himself as a prophetic moralist. These elements do not, of course, ever lead Spenser to a call for rebellion or the redistribution of wealth, but they do lead to the strong expression of arguments upon which such a call could be based. For as the German peasant rebellion of 1525 suggests, radical protest in the early modern period appealed not to perceptions utterly alien to those expressed in official circles but rather drew unacceptable conclusions from those same perceptions.<sup>34</sup>

Yet in Book 5, Artegall does not only object to the Giant's conclusions; he objects as strenuously to the arguments on which the Giant professes to base his program, arguments that, as we have seen, closely resemble the poet's own. To explain this apparent inconsistency, we may argue, following Paul Alpers' sensitive account of Spenser's poetic practice, that the rhetorical nature of *The Faerie Queene* obviates the necessity of strict narrative consistency and appeals instead to the reader's "trust in the poem," that is, to his acceptance of the meanings made apparent in any particular episode.<sup>35</sup> But given the close proximity of Spenser's Proem and Artegall's encounter with the Giant, we should add that this trust depends upon the drawing of a firm boundary between acceptable and subversive versions of the same perceptions and that this boundary is affirmed, as in Sidney and Dürer, by the representation of violence:

Whom when so lewdly minded *Talus* found,  
Approching nigh vnto him cheeke by cheeke,  
He shouldered him from off the higher ground,  
And down the rock him throwing, in the sea him dround.

Like as a ship, whom cruell tempest driues  
 Vpon a rocke with horrible dismay,  
 Her shattered ribs in thousand peeces riuies,  
 And spoyling all her geares and goodly ray,  
 Does make her selfe misfortunes piteous pray.  
 So downe the cliffe the wretched Gyant tumbled;  
 His battred ballances in peeces lay,  
 His timbered bones all broken rudely rumbled,  
 So was the high aspyring with huge ruine humbled.  
 (49–50)

Talus's violence, in destroying the Giant, exorcises the potentially dangerous social consequences—the praxis—that might follow from Spenser's own eloquent social criticism. The cosmological vision and the moral outrage remain, but the "great expectations" of a radical reordering of wealth and power are shattered. Indeed, from this perspective, the proximity of the Proem and the episode is not an embarrassment but a positive achievement, for Spenser's narrative can function as a kind of training in the rejection of subversive conclusions drawn from licensed moral outrage.

This outrage, to be sure, is not licensed insofar as it is voiced by the Giant; rather it is answered by Artegall's arguments for perfectly secure cosmological and social boundaries. But as a further aspect of the reader's training, Artegall's rhetoric is not allowed to undermine the Proem's perception of injustice in the world; otherwise, the knight of justice would be completely immobilized: in a divinely ordered universe in which "no change hath yet been found" from the original state of perfection, there would be nothing for him to do. Instead the arguments are understood to be true, but *only* in relation to the Giant who is not himself persuaded by them and impiously refuses the boundaries proposed by Artegall.<sup>36</sup> Hence the necessity for pushing the Giant out of bounds and hence, too, the necessity for the push to come, unasked for, from Talus, agent of the inflexible execution of the strict letter of the law. In the special context of this episode, Artegall must be freed from the necessity of direct action, for his refutation of the Giant suggests that active intervention in the universe is not justified.

What we are given then is a more rigorous and explicit version than in Sidney of the separation of rhetoric and violence, a separation here sufficiently strong to save the noble hero entirely from the threat of the strain that would attend a base encounter. That threat is directly acknowledged when, in the wake of the Giant's destruction, "the people" rise up for revenge; seeing the "lawlesse multitude" coming toward him, Artegall "much was troubled," we are told, "ne wist what to doo":

For loth he was his noble hands t'embrew  
 In the base blood of such a rascall crew;  
 And otherwise, if that he should retire,  
 He fear'd least they with shame would him pursew.

Therefore he Talus to them sent, t'inquire  
 The cause of their array, and truce for to desire.  
 But soone as they him nigh approaching spide,  
 They gan with all their weapons him assay,  
 And rudely stroke at him on euery side:  
 Yet nought they could him hurt, ne ought dismay.  
 But when at them he with his flaile gan lay,  
 He like a swarme of flyes them ouerthrew;  
 Ne any of them durst come in his way,  
 But here and there before his presence flew,  
 And hid themselues in holes and bushes from his vew.  
 (52-53)

Arteggall takes the nobler course which is to persuade and to negotiate; the violence—characteristically unleashed on those who are represented as pathetically vulnerable—is the prerogative of Talus who can no more receive dishonor than can a Cruise missile.

Spenser's solution to the representational problem posed by a victory over popular rebellion hinges then upon Talus, that is, upon the allegorical separation of rhetoric and violence. In consequence, however, direct action remains a problem for Spenser's hero through the rest of Book 5 which ends, significantly, not with Arteggall's glorious victory over the tyrant Grantorto, but with the slanders heaped on the victor by Envy, Detraction, and the Blatant Beast. Like Dürer and Sidney, Spenser saves the heroic as genre but at a high cost to the hero himself: in Dürer the victor is absent, in Sidney disguised, in Spenser split off from heroic actions imputed now to a mechanical monster. If we turn now to our final example of a late sixteenth-century artist grappling with this problem, we encounter a solution that reconstitutes the social status of the hero and in so doing fundamentally alters the heroic genre.

The artist is Shakespeare; the problem is the representation of Jack Cade's rebellion in *2 Henry VI*, a play probably first performed in 1590. Shakespeare depicts Cade's rebellion as a grotesque and sinister farce, the archetypal lower class revolt both in its motives and in its ludicrousness.<sup>37</sup> Like Dürer and Sidney, Shakespeare calls attention to the comic humbleness of the rebels' social origins—"There's Best's son, the tanner of Wingham, . . . And Dick the butcher, . . . And Smith the weaver" (4.2.21ff)—and like Spenser, he wryly depicts their "great expectations":

There shall be in England seven half-penny loaves  
 sold for a penny; the three-hoop'd pot shall have ten  
 hoops; and I will make it felony to drink small beer.  
 (4.2.62-5)

How can such buffoons be put down without embarrassment to the victors? In part the answer lies, as for Spenser, in the separation of rhetoric and violence. Cade



and his “rabblement” reach London— “Up Fish Street! down Saint Magnus’ Corner! kill and knock down! throw them into Thames!” (4.8.1-2)—but are brought up short by the appearance of the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Clifford. These noblemen come, as they say, as “ambassadors from the King / Unto the commons” and pronounce “free pardon” to all who will go home in peace. A few rousing speeches from the aristocrats, with the invocation of the name of Henry V and the threat of a French invasion, suffice; the rebellion instantly collapses, the state triumphs, and Cade flees. But if the rebels can be easily reabsorbed into the ranks of loyal Englishmen, only momentarily misled by a demagogue, the rebel leader must still be destroyed, and the history play will not accommodate a mechanical man to do the killing.

Shakespeare’s solution is simple, effective, and, in its way, elegant. Cade escapes to the country only to be threatened with starvation, “Wherefore,” he conveniently tells us, “on a brick wall have I climb’d into this garden, to see if I can eat grass, or pick a sallet” (4.10.6-8). The owner of the garden enters, voicing to himself the familiar sentiments of retirement poetry:

Lord! who would live turmoiled in the court,  
And may enjoy such quiet walks as these?  
This small inheritance my father left me  
Contenteth me, and worth a monarchy.

(4.10.16-19)

Beyond the familiar contrast of court and country, Shakespeare is careful to note in these lines that the speaker is the garden’s actual owner, that the property is a modest inheritance, and that he is thus to be distinguished from a tenant, on the one hand, and a great lord, on the other. This care in placing the speaker in relation to property is underscored by Cade’s immediate response: “Here’s the lord of the soil come to seize me for a stray, for entering his fee-simple without leave” (4.10.24-25). This aside, which rests on the legal right of a property owner with absolute title to his land to impound stray animals that wander onto estate, makes it clear that the garden is *enclosed private property*, not in any sense, then, a public or common domain. And the owner’s reply to Cade’s grotesquely aggressive challenge— “I’ll make thee eat iron like an ostrich, and swallow my sword like a great pin”—reiterates again the property rights that are at stake here:

Why, rude companion, whatso’er thou be,  
I know thee not . . .  
Is’t not enough to break into my garden,  
And like a thief to come to rob my grounds,  
Climbing my walls in spite of me the owner,  
But thou wilt brave me with these saucy terms?

(4.10.30-35)

What is happening, I suggest, is that status relations—"I say it was never merry world in England since gentlemen came up" (4.2.7-9)—are being transformed before our eyes into property relations, and the concern, as in Sidney and Spenser, for maintaining social and even cosmic boundaries is reconceived as a concern for maintaining freehold boundaries. Symbolic estate gives way to real estate. And in this revised context, the context of property rather than rank, the fear of stain in the representation of an unequal social encounter vanishes altogether. The owner of the garden does not hide his name, nor does he look for someone else to do the killing. Quite the contrary, he proudly names himself, as he prepares, with unembarrassed complacency, for the unequal encounter:

Nay, it shall ne'er be said, while England stands,  
That Alexander Iden, esquire of Kent,  
Took odds to combat a poor famish'd man.  
Oppose thy steadfast-gazing eyes to mine,  
See if thou canst outface me with thy looks:  
Set limb to limb, and thou art far the lesser;  
Thy hand is but a finger to my fist;  
Thy leg a stick compared with this truncheon.  
(4.10.41-48)

Iden perceives Cade not as a social rebel but as a belligerent thief who has tried to steal a salad; theirs is a contest not between an aristocrat and a churl but between a well-fed owner of property and "a poor famished man." Only from Cade's dying words does Iden learn whom he has slain, and his reaction enables us to gauge the extraordinary distance between Shakespeare's representation of this victory and the others at which we have looked:

Is't Cade that I have slain, that monstrous traitor?  
Sword, I will hallow thee for this thy deed,  
And hang thee o'er my tomb when I am dead:  
Ne'er shall this blood be wiped from thy point,  
But thou shalt wear it as a herald's coat,  
To emblaze the honour that thy master got.  
(2.10.65-70)

The sword that Dürer had to depict without anyone to wield it becomes Iden's proudest possession; the deed that Sidney's heroes had to perform in disguise becomes a claim to distinction; and the blood that Spenser's knight did not wish to get on his hands becomes a badge of honor. The aristocrat has given way to the man of property, and heroic commemoration has been absorbed into a new genre, the history play.

1. Albrecht Dürer, *The Painter's Manual* [*Unterweisung der Messung*, 1525], translated by Walter L. Strauss (New York: Abaris, 1977), p. 227.
2. Sebastiano Serlio, "Scena tragica," in *Architettura* (1551) [*The Book of Architecture* (London, 1611), Fol. 25<sup>v</sup>].
3. *Orlando Furioso*, Canto 9: 88–91; also Canto 11: 21–28. See Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), pp. 108–109.
4. *Painter's Manual*, p. 233. The mock encomium recalls Erasmus's *Praise of Folly*.
5. This mode of depicting Christ seems to date from the late fourteenth century and probably derives from a traditional representation of Job: the mourning figure would then suggest perfect patience in humiliation as well as perfect innocence. See G. von der Osten, "Job and Christ," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 16 (1953), 153–58; Hans Kauffmann, "Albrecht Dürers Dreikönigs-Altar," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch (Westdeutsches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte)* 10 (1938), 166–78; Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 314. I am indebted to Professor Baxandall for suggesting to me the connection between Dürer's peasant and the figure of Christ in Distress.
6. On the Peasants' War, see especially Peter Blickle, *The Revolution of 1525*, translated by Thomas A. Brady, Jr. and H. C. Erik Midelfort (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981 [original edition 1977]).
7. "Admonition to Peace, A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants in Swabia [1525]," translated by Charles M. Jacobs, revised by Robert C. Schultz, in *Luther's Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann, 55 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), vol. 46, p. 39. See Hubert Kirchner, *Luther and the Peasants' War*, translated by Darrell Jodock (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972); Mark U. Edwards, Jr., *Luther and the False Brethren* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 60–81; Hans Althaus, *Luthers Haltung im Bauernkrieg* (Darmstadt, 1969 [1st ed., Tübingen, 1952]; Robert N. Crossley, *Luther and the Peasants' War* (New York: Exposition Press, 1972).
8. "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants [1525]," in *Luther's Works*, vol. 46, p. 50. On Luther's apocalyptic expectations at this time, see M. Greschat, "Luthers Haltung im Bauernkrieg," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 56 (1965), 31–47. For a dissenting view, see Hartmut Lehmann, "Luther und der Bauernkrieg," in *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 20 (1969), 129–39.
9. "Against the Robbing . . .," *Luther's Works*, vol. 46, pp. 53–54. See also "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved [1526], in *Luther's Works*, vol. 46, pp. 89–137.
10. Thus in January, 1525, three young painters, all of whom had studied with Dürer, were called before the Nuremberg City Council to answer charges of radicalism. One of them, Barthel Beham, was reported to have declared that people should stop working until all property was divided equally, and he reputedly told the City Council that he recognized no authority other than God's. Later in 1525 Hieronymus Andreae Formschneyder, who had cut many of Dürer's designs into wood, was ostracized for openly supporting the rebellious peasants. See Walter L. Strauss, *The Complete Drawings of Albrecht Dürer* (New York: Abaris Books, 1974), vol. 4, p. 2269. Sebald Beham seems, however, to have subsequently attacked the rebellious peasants in woodcuts executed in 1535; I have profited from an unpublished paper by Keith P. F. Moxey, "Sebald Beham's 'Church Anniversary Holidays': Festive Peasants as Instruments of Repressive Humour."

11. Erwin Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), vol. 1, p. 233. On Dürer's admiration for Luther in the early 1520s, see Strauss, *Complete Drawings*, vol. 4, p. 1903–1907. Dürer's admiration for Luther may not necessarily have extended to his social views at the time of the Peasants' War.
  12. Quoted in Marcel Brion, *Albrecht Dürer: His Life and Work*, trans. James Cleugh (London: Thames & Hudson, 1960), p. 269; see also Strauss, *Complete Drawings*, vol. 4, pp. 2280–81. Dürer's exquisite watercolor is the record of a private experience that requires elaborate and careful notation, as opposed to the public monument which is conceived as an object whose symbolism is readily decipherable. Dürer had earlier recorded his vision of the Apocalypse in his immensely powerful illustrations to the book of Revelations.
  13. "An Open Letter on the Harsh Book Against the Peasants [1525]," in *Luther's Works*, vol. 46, p. 70.
  14. We seem to be in a period in which public commemorative monuments, though continually erected, are extremely difficult to design successfully. Consider the national debate over the recently dedicated monument to the Vietnam War dead or the controversy over Robert Arneson's bust of the slain San Francisco mayor, George Moscone (particularly over the inclusion, on the pedestal, of a hyper-realistic representation of the murder weapon). Dürer's monument is inadvertently recalled and transformed in a Salvadorean poster, currently circulating in Berkeley, that depicts a peasant crucified on farm implements.
  15. The Renaissance displays a markedly increased sensitivity, nourished by classicism, to the theoretical implications of genre differentiation. Dürer's designs imply, if only as a nostalgic and shadowy recollection, the existence of a form of heroic commemoration in which there is a full sympathetic relationship between the object that is represented and the representation itself. This form is at once recalled and ironically (or at least playfully) represented in the design for a victory monument made out of the objects that have given the victory: a monument that collapses the distance of representation, but at the expense of the human victor. Set against this heroic commemoration, there is the comic monument which depends upon the continued force of the old heroic values, now deliberately violated for amusement's sake. And in the middle, there is what we may call, following Joel Fineman, the monument of praise paradox: at once an acknowledgement of the distance between the monument and the original heroic values and an attempt to preserve those values precisely through such an acknowledgement.
- This praise paradox is in the middle in another sense: it is located between the symbolic and the narrative modes. In the symbolic mode the elements are organized according to a conceptual schema that provides a syntax; in the narrative mode the elements are organized to tell a story, and this story too provides a syntax. But in the Dürer monument there is no syntax; the elements in the monument are paratactic. Parataxis—the refusal of both paradigmatic organization according to a schema of conceptual values and a syntagmatic organization according to a schema of narrative values—is the perfect expression of the monument's intermediate, paradoxical position.
16. Quoted by Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," in J. G. Peristiany, ed., *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 24.
  17. On the semiotics of execution, see Samuel Y. Edgerton, Jr., "Maniera and the Mannaia: Decorum and Decapitation in the Sixteenth Century," in *The Meaning of Mannerism*, edited by Franklin W. Robinson and Stephen G. Nichols, Jr. (Hanover, N.H., University Press of New England, 1972), pp. 67–103.
  18. Even were scholars to discover a letter against the peasants written in Dürer's own hand,

someone could argue that in the wake of the public attacks upon his radical students and associates, he was being ironic or self-protective. I should add that a radical letter would be subject to comparable qualifications and doubts. We must understand that what is at stake is more than Dürer's personal orientation, and the path to such an understanding is the study of the genre problem.

19. "Open Letter," *Luther's Works*, vol. 46, p. 75.
20. "Against the Robbing. . .," *op. cit.*, p. 53.
21. See Mikhail Bakhtin's important concept of "heteroglossia," in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 288ff.
22. F. G. Emmison, *Elizabethan Life: Disorder (Mainly from Essex Sessions and Assize Records)*, (Chelmsford: Essex County Council, 1970), p. 57.
23. Emmison, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.
24. Thomas Deloney, *Jack of Newberrie*, quoted in Christopher Hill, "The Many-Headed Monster in Late Tudor and Early Stuart Political Thinking," in *From the Renaissance to the Counter Reformation: Essays in Honor of Garrett Mattingly*, edited by Charles H. Carter (N.Y.: Random House, 1965), p. 302.
25. See Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1960); Frances A. Yates, "Elizabethan Chivalry: The Romance of the Accession Day Tilts," in *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1975), pp. 88-111; and Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977).
26. Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, edited by Maurice Evans (New York: Penguin, 1977), pp. 380-81.
27. On the social history of Penshurst, there is a fine, unpublished study, "Penshurst: The Semiotics of Place and the Poetics of History," by Don E. Wayne of the University of California, San Diego. On Sidney's social attitudes, see Richard McCoy, *Sir Philip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1979).
28. On carnivalesque laughter, see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968); on peasants and laughter, see Svetlana Alpers, "Bruegel's Festive Peasants," in *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 6(1972/73), 163-76.
29. Jack Winkler, "Lollianos and the Desperadoes," in *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100 (1980), 155-81.
30. Nashe cunningly replicates and parodies this imagined threat in his comical, sadistic account of the slaughter of the Anabaptists: "This tale must at one time or other give up the ghost, and as good now as stay longer. I would gladly rid my hands of it cleanly if I could tell how, for what with talking of cobblers and tinkers and ropemakers and butchers and dirt daubers, the mark is clean gone out of my muse's mouth" (*The Unfortunate Traveler*, in *Elizabethan Prose Fiction*, edited by Merritt Lawlis [N.Y.: Odyssey, 1967], p. 474).
31. For an illuminating account of the difference between the professional and amateur writers, see Richard Helgerson, *The Laureate in His Generation: Self-Presentation and the Renaissance Literary System* (forthcoming, U.C. Press). I am grateful to Professor Jonathan Goldberg for valuable suggestions about the "poor painter."
32. On rhetoric as social discipline, see for example Thomas Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorique* [1560]: "Neither can I see that men could haue bene brought by any other meanes, to liue together in fellowship of life, to maintaine Cities, to deale truly, and willingly obeye one another, if men at the first had not by art and eloquence, perswaded that which they full ofte found out by reason. For what man I pray you, beeing better able to maintaine

himself by valiaunt courage, then by liuing in base subiection, would not rather looke to rule like a Lord, then to live like an vnderling: if by reason he were not perswaded, that it behoueth euery man to liue in his owne vocation," in *English Literary Criticism: The Renaissance*, ed. O. B. Hardison, Jr. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), pp. 27–28.

33. Citations of the *Faerie Queene* are to *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, edited by Edwin Greenlaw et al. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1932–57). There is a brilliant account of Book 5 in Angus Fletcher, *The Prophetic Moment: An Essay on Spenser* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971). See also the valuable commentary in Jane Aptekar, *Icons of Justice: Iconography and Thematic Imagery in Book V of "The Faerie Queene"* (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1969); T. K. Dunseath, *Spenser's Allegory of Justice in Book Five of "The Faerie Queene"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).
34. See Stephen Greenblatt, "Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and Its Subversion," in *Glyph* 8 (1981), 40–61.
35. Paul J. Alpers, "How to Read *The Faerie Queene*," in *Essays in Criticism* 18(1968), 440. Alpers would not necessarily discount contradictions in passages so close together; moreover, he finds Book V of *The Faerie Queene* the inferior work of an exhausted and demoralized poet.
36. The paradox is defused but not altogether resolved by the mythic stature of Spenser's narrative: Book V is an account of the *origin* of disorder, and Artegall, who had been trained by Astraea, may well have believed that no substantial change, physical or moral, had yet afflicted the universe.
37. All citations of *2 Henry VI* are from the Arden edition of the play, edited by Andrew S. Cairncross (London: Methuen, 1957). Shakespeare bases his depiction of Cade's rebellion less upon accounts of the actual rising in 1449–1450 than upon accounts of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

## **“Shaping Fantasies”: Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture**

### **I**

SHAKESPEARE'S Duke Theseus formulates policy when he proclaims that “The lunatic, the lover, and the poet / Are of imagination all compact”; that “Lovers and madmen have such seething brains, / Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend / More than cool reason ever comprehends.”<sup>1</sup> The social order of Theseus' Athens depends upon his authority to name the forms and his power to control the subjects of mental disorder. The ruler's task is to *comprehend*—to understand and to encompass—the energies and motives, the diverse, unstable, and potentially subversive *apprehensions* of the ruled. But the Duke—so self-assured and benignly condescending in his comprehension—might also have some cause for apprehension: he himself and the fictional society over which he rules have been shaped by the imagination of a poet. My intertextual study of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and symbolic forms shaped by other Elizabethan lunatics, lovers, and poets construes the play as calling attention to itself, not only as an end but also as a source of cultural production.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in writing of “shaping fantasies,” I mean to suggest the dialectical character of cultural representations: the fantasies by which the text of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has been shaped are also those to which it gives shape. I explore this dialectic within a specifically Elizabethan context of cultural production: the interplay between representations of gender and power in a stratified society in which authority is everywhere invested in men—everywhere, that is, except at the top.

In the introduction to his recent edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Harold Brooks summarizes the consensus of modern criticism: “Love and marriage is the [play's] central theme: love aspiring to and consummated in marriage, or to a harmonious partnership within it” (p. cxxx). But, as Paul Olson suggested some years ago, the harmonious marital unions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are in harmony with doctrines of Tudor apologists for the patriarchal family: marital union implies a domestic hierarchy; marital harmony is predicated upon the wife's obedience to her husband.<sup>3</sup> Brooks' romantic view and Olson's authoritarian one offer limited but complementary perspectives on the dramatic process by which *A*

*Midsummer Night's Dream* figures the social relationship between the sexes in courtship, marriage, and parenthood. The play imaginatively embodies what Gayle Rubin has called a "sex/gender system": a socio-historical construction of sexual identity, difference and relationship; an appropriation of human anatomical and physiological features by an ideological discourse; a culture-specific fantasia upon Nature's universal theme.<sup>4</sup>

As has long been recognized, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has affinities with Elizabethan courtly entertainments. In his edition of the play, Harold Brooks cautiously endorses the familiar notion that it was "designed to grace a wedding in a noble household." He adds that "it seems likely that Queen Elizabeth was present when the *Dream* was first acted. . . . She delighted in homage paid to her as the Virgin Queen, and receives it in the myth-making about the imperial votaress" (pp. liii, lv). Although attractive and plausible, such topical connections must remain wholly conjectural. The perspective of my own analysis of the play's court connection is dialectical rather than causal, ideological rather than occasional. For, whether or not Queen Elizabeth was physically present at the first performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, her pervasive *cultural presence* was a condition of the play's imaginative possibility. This is not to imply that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is merely an inert "product" of Elizabethan culture. The play is rather a new *production* of Elizabethan culture, enlarging the dimensions of the cultural field and altering the lines of force within it. Thus, in the sense that the royal presence was itself *re-presented* within the play, it may be said that the play henceforth conditioned the imaginative possibility of the Queen. In what follows, I shall explore how Shakespeare's play and other Elizabethan texts figure the Elizabethan sex/gender system and the queen's place within it.

## II

I would like to recount an Elizabethan dream—not Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, but one dreamt by Simon Forman on January 23, 1597. Forman—a professional astrologer and physician, amateur alchemist, and avid playgoer—recorded in his diary the following account:

I dreamt that I was with the Queen, and that she was a little elderly woman in a coarse white petticoat all unready; and she and I walked up and down through lanes and closes, talking and reasoning of many matters. At last we came over a great close where were many people, and there were two men at hard words. One of them was a weaver, a tall man with a reddish beard, distract of his wits. She talked to him and he spoke very merrily unto her, and at last did take her and kiss her. So I took her by the arm and put her away; and told her the fellow was frantic. And so we went from him and I led her by the arm still, and then we went through a dirty lane. She had a long, white smock, very clean and fair, and it trailed in the dirt and her coat behind. I took her coat and did carry it up a good way, and then it hung too low before. I told her she should do me a favour to let me wait on her, and she said I should.



Then said I, "I mean to wait *upon* you and not under you, that I might make this belly a little bigger to carry up this smock and coats out of the dirt." And so we talked merrily and then she began to lean upon me, when we were past the dirt and to be very familiar with me, and methought she began to love me. And when we were alone, out of sight, methought she would have kissed me.<sup>5</sup>

It was then that Forman awoke.

Within the dreamer's unconscious, the "little elderly woman" who was his political mother must have been linked to the mother who had borne him. In an autobiographical fragment, Forman repeatedly characterizes himself as unloved and rejected by his mother during his childhood and youth: he writes of himself, that "Simon, being a child of six years old, his father loved him above all the rest, but his mother nor brethren loved him not. . . . After the father of Simon was dead, his mother, who never loved him, grudged at his being at home, and what fault soever was committed by any of the rest he was beaten for it."<sup>6</sup> Forman's mother was still alive at the date of his dream, a very old woman. C. L. Barber has suggested that "the very central and problematical role of women in Shakespeare—and in Elizabethan drama generally—reflects the fact that Protestantism did away with the cult of the Virgin Mary. It meant the loss of ritual resource for dealing with the internal residues in all of us of the once all-powerful and all-inclusive mother."<sup>7</sup> What Barber fails to note is that a concerted effort was in fact made to appropriate the symbolism and the affective power of the suppressed Marian cult in order to foster an Elizabethan cult. Both the internal residues and the religious rituals were potential resources for dealing with the political problems of the Elizabethan regime. Perhaps, at the same time, the royal cult may also have provided Forman and other Elizabethans with a resource for dealing with the internal residues of their relationships to the primary maternal figures of infancy. My concern is not to psychoanalyze Forman but rather to emphasize the historical specificity of psychological processes, the politics of the unconscious. Whatever the place of this dream in the dreamer's interior life, the text in which he represents it to himself allows us to glimpse the cultural contours of an Elizabethan psyche.<sup>8</sup>

The virginal sex-object of Forman's dream, the "little elderly woman" scantily clad in white, corresponds with startling accuracy to descriptions of Elizabeth's actual appearance in 1597. In the year that Forman dreamt his dream, the ambassador extraordinary of the French King Henri IV described the English Queen in his journal. At his first audience, he recorded:

She was strangely attired in a dress of silver cloth, white and crimson. . . . She kept the front of her dress open, and one could see the whole of her bosom, and passing low, and often she would open the front of this robe with her hands as if she was too hot. . . . Her bosom is somewhat wrinkled . . . but lower down her flesh is exceeding white and delicate, so far as one could see. As for her face, it is and appears to be very aged. It is long and thin, and her teeth are very yellow and unequal. . . . Many of them are missing so that one cannot understand her easily when she speaks quickly.<sup>9</sup>

For the ambassador's second audience, the Queen appeared

clad in a dress of black taffeta, bound with gold lace. . . . She had a petticoat of white damask, girdled, and open in front, as was also her chemise, in such a manner that she often opened this dress and one could see all her belly, and even to her navel. . . . When she raises her head, she has a trick of putting both hands on her gown and opening it insomuch that all her belly can be seen (pp. 36–37).

In the following year, another foreign visitor who saw the Queen noted that “her bosom was uncovered, as all the English ladies have it till they marry.”<sup>10</sup>

Elizabeth's display of her bosom signified her status as a maiden. But, as in Spenser's personification of Charity as a nursing mother or in the popular emblem of the life-rendering Pelican (which Elizabeth wore as a pendant upon her bosom in one of her portraits), her breasts were also those of a selfless and bountiful mother.<sup>11</sup> The image of the Queen as a wetnurse may have had some currency. Of the Earl of Essex's insatiable thirst for those offices and honors which were in the Queen's gift, Naunton wrote that “my Lord . . . drew in too fast, like a childe sucking on an over-uberous Nurse.”<sup>12</sup> The Queen was the source of her subjects' social sustenance, the fount of all preferments; she was represented as a virgin-mother—part Madonna, part Ephesian Diana. Like her bosom, Elizabeth's belly must have figured her political motherhood. But, as the French ambassador insinuates, these conspicuous self-displays were also a kind of erotic provocation. The official portraits and courtly blazons that represent the splendor of the Queen's immutable body politic are nicely complemented by the ambassador's sketches of the Queen's sixty-five year old body natural. His perceptions of the vanity and melancholy of this personage in no way negate his numerous observations of her grace, vitality, and political cunning. Indeed, in the very process of describing the Queen's preoccupation with the impact of her appearance upon her beholders, the ambassador demonstrates its impact upon *himself*.

So, too, the aged Queen's body exerts a power upon the mind of Doctor Forman; and, in his dream, he exerts a reciprocal power upon the body of the Queen. The virginal, erotic, and maternal aspects of the Elizabethan feminine that the royal cult appropriates from the domestic domain are themselves appropriated by one of the Queen's subjects and made the material for his dreamwork. At the core of Forman's dream is his joke with the Queen: “I told her she should do me a favour to let me wait on her, and she said I should. Then said I, ‘I mean to wait *upon* you and not under you, that I might make this belly a little bigger to carry up this smock and coats out of the dirt.’” The joke—and, in a sense, the whole dream—is generated from Forman's verbal quibble: to *wait upon*/to *weight upon*. Within this subversive pun is concentrated the reciprocal relationship between dependency and domination. With one vital exception, all forms of public and domestic authority in Elizabethan England were vested in men: in fathers, husbands, masters, teachers, magistrates, lords. It was inevitable that the rule of a woman would generate peculiar tensions

within such a “patriarchal” society.<sup>13</sup> Forman’s dream epitomizes the indissolubly political and sexual character of the cultural forms in which such tensions might be represented and addressed. In Forman’s wordplay, the subject’s desire for employment (to *wait* upon) coexists with his desire for mastery (to *weight* upon); and the pun is manifested physically in his desire to inseminate his sovereign, which is at once to serve her and to possess her. And because the figures in the dream are not only subject and prince but also man and woman, what the *subject* desires to perform, the *man* has the capacity to perform: for Forman to raise the Queen’s belly is to make her female body to bear the sign of his own potency. In the context of the cross-cutting relationships between subject and prince, man and woman, the dreamer insinuates into a gesture of homage, a will to power.

It is strange and admirable that the dreamer’s rival for the Queen should be a weaver—as if Nick Bottom had wandered out of Shakespeare’s *Dream* and into Forman’s. Forman’s story of the night does indeed have affinities with the “most rare vision” (4.1.203) that Shakespeare grants to Bottom. Bottom’s dream, like Forman’s, is an experience of fleeting intimacy with a powerful female who is at once lover, mother, and queen. The liaison between The Fairy Queen and the assified artisan is an outrageous theatrical realization of a personal fantasy that was obviously not Forman’s alone. Titania treats Bottom as if he were both her child and her lover. And she herself is ambivalently nurturing and threatening, imperious and enthralled. She dotes upon Bottom, and indulges in him all those desires to be fed, scratched, and coddled that make Bottom’s dream into a parodic fantasy of infantile narcissism and dependency. The sinister side of Titania’s possessiveness is manifested in her binding up of Bottom’s tongue, and her intimidating command, “Out of this wood do not desire to go:/Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no” (3.1.145–46). But if Titania manipulates Bottom, an artisan and amateur actor, she herself is manipulated by Oberon, a “King of shadows” (3.2.347) and the play’s internal dramatist. A fantasy of male dependency upon woman is expressed and contained within a fantasy of male control over woman; the social reality of the player’s dependency upon a Queen is inscribed within the imaginative reality of the dramatist’s control over a Queen. Both Forman’s private dream-text and Shakespeare’s public play-text embody a culture-specific dialectic between personal and public images of gender and power; both are characteristically *Elizabethan* cultural forms.

### III

The beginning of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* coincides with the end of a struggle in which Theseus has been victorious over the Amazon warrior:

Hippolyta, I woo’d thee with my sword,  
And won thy love doing thee injuries;

“Shaping Fantasies”

But I will wed thee in another key,  
With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.  
(1.1.16–19)

Descriptions of the Amazons are ubiquitous in Elizabethan texts. For example, all of the essentials are present in popular form in William Painter's "Novel of the Amazons," which opens the second book of *The Palace of Pleasure* (1575). Here we read that the Amazons "were most excellent warriors"; that "they mured certain of their husbands" at the beginning of their gynocracy; that, "if they brought forth daughters, they nurished and trayned them up in armes, and other manlik exercises. . . . If they were delivered of males, they sent them to their fathers, and if by chaunce they kept any backe, they mured them, or else brake their armes and legs in such wise as they had no power to beare weapons, and served for nothyng but to spin, twist, and doe other feminine labour."<sup>14</sup> The Amazons' penchant for male infanticide is complemented by their obvious delight in subjecting powerful heroes to their will. Spenser's Artegall, hero of the Legend of Justice, becomes enslaved to Radigund, "A Princesse of great powre, and greater pride, / And Queene of Amazons, in armes well tride" (*FQ*, 5.4.33). Defeated by Radigund in personal combat, Artegall must undergo degradation and effeminization of the kind endured by Hercules and by the Amazons' maimed sons.

Sixteenth century travel narratives often recreate the ancient Amazons of Scythia in South America or in Africa. Invariably, the Amazons are relocated just beyond the receding boundary of *terra incognita*. Thus, in Sierra Leone in 1582, the chaplain of an English expedition to the Spice Islands recorded the report of a Portuguese trader that "near the mountains of the moon there is a queen, empress of all these Amazons, a witch and a cannibal who daily feeds on the flesh of boys. She ever remains unmarried, but she has intercourse with a great number of men by whom she begets offspring. The kingdom, however, remains hereditary to the daughters, not to the sons."<sup>15</sup> This cultural fantasy assimilates Amazonian myth, witchcraft, and cannibalism into an anti-culture which precisely inverts European norms of political authority, sexual license, marriage practices, and inheritance rules.<sup>16</sup> The attitude toward the Amazons expressed in such Renaissance texts is a mixture of fascination and horror. Amazonian mythology seems symbolically to embody and to control a collective anxiety about the power of the female not only to dominate or reject the male but to create and destroy him. It is an ironic acknowledgment by an androcentric culture of the degree to which men are in fact dependent upon women: upon mothers and nurses, for their birth and nurture; upon mistresses and wives, for the validation of their manhood.

Shakespeare engages his wedding play in a dialectic with this mythological formation. The Amazons have been defeated before the play begins; and nuptial rites are to be celebrated when it ends. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* focuses upon different crucial transitions in the male and female life cycles: the fairy plot, upon taking

"a little changeling boy" from childhood into youth, from the world of the mother into the world of the father; the Athenian plot, upon taking a maiden from youth into maturity, from the world of the father into the world of the husband. The pairing of the four Athenian lovers is made possible by the magical powers of Oberon and made lawful by the political authority of Theseus. Each of these rulers is preoccupied with the fulfillment of his own desires in the possession or repossession of a wife. Only after Hippolyta has been mastered by Theseus may marriage seal them "in everlasting bond of fellowship" (1.1.85). And only after "proud Titania" has been degraded by "jealous Oberon" (2.1.60, 61), has "in mild terms begg'd" (4.1.57) his patience, and has readily yielded the changeling boy to him, may they be "new in amity" (4.1.86).

The diachronic structure of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* eventually restores the inverted Amazonian system of gender and nurture to a patriarchal norm. But the initial plans for Theseus' triumph are immediately interrupted by news of yet another unruly female. Egeus wishes to confront his daughter Hermia with two alternatives: absolute obedience to the paternal will, or death. Theseus intervenes with a third alternative: if she refuses to marry whom her father chooses, Hermia must submit

Either to die the death or to abjure  
Forever the society of men.  
...  
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,  
Chanting faint hymns to the cold, fruitless moon.  
Thrice blessed they that master so their blood  
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;  
But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd  
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,  
Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness.

(1.1.65-66, 71-78)

Theseus has characteristically Protestant notions about the virtue of virginity: maidenhood is a phase in the life-cycle of a woman who is destined for married chastity and motherhood. As a permanent state, "single blessedness" is mere sterility. Theseus expands Hermia's options only in order to clarify her constraints. In the process of tempering the father's domestic tyranny, the Duke affirms his own interests and authority. He represents the life of a vestal as a *punishment*, and it is one that fits the nature of Hermia's crime. The maiden is surrounded by men, each of whom—as father, lover, or lord—claims a kind of property in her. Yet Hermia dares to suggest that she has a claim to property in herself: she refuses to "yield [her] virgin patent up / Unto his lordship whose unwished yoke / [Her] soul consents not to give sovereignty" (1.1.80-82). Like Rosalind, in *As You Like It*, Hermia wishes the limited privilege of giving herself. Theseus appropriates the source of Hermia's fragile

power: her ability to deny men access to her body. He usurps the power of virginity by imposing upon Hermia his own power to deny her the use of her body. If she will not submit to its use by her father and by Demetrius, she must "abjure forever the society of men," and "live a barren sister all [her] life" (1.1.65–66, 72). Her own words suggest that the female body is a supreme form of property and a locus for the contestation of authority. The self-possession of single blessedness is a form of power against which are opposed the marriage doctrines of Shakespeare's culture and the very form of his comedy.<sup>17</sup>

In devising Hermia's punishment, Theseus appropriates and parodies the very condition which the Amazons sought to enjoy. They rejected marriages with men and alliances with patriarchal societies because, as one sixteenth century writer put it, they esteemed "that Patrimonie was not a meane of libertie but of thralldome."<sup>18</sup> The separatism of the Amazons is a repudiation of men's claims to have property in women. But if Amazonian myth figures the inversionary claims of matriarchy, sisterhood, and the autonomy of women, it also figures the *repudiation* of those claims in the act of Amazonomachy. Painter recounts the battle between the Amazons, led by Menalippe and Hippolyta (both sisters of Queen Antiopa) and the Greeks, led by Hercules and Theseus. Hercules returned Menalippe to Antiopa in exchange for the Queen's armor, "but Theseus for no offer that she coulde make, woulde he deliver Hippolyta, with whom he was so farre in love, that he carried her home with him, and afterward toke her to wyfe, of whom hee had a sonne called Hipolitus" (*The Palace of Pleasure*, 2:163). Theseus' violent and insatiable lust—what North's Plutarch suggestively calls his "womannishenes"—divorced Hippolyta from her sisters and from the society of Amazons.<sup>19</sup>

Shakespeare's play naturalizes Amazonomachy in the vicissitudes of courtship. Heterosexual desire disrupts the innocent pleasures of Hermia's girlhood: "What graces in my love do dwell, / That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!" (1.1.206–207). Hermia's farewell to Helena is also a farewell to their girlhood friendship, a delicate repudiation of youthful homophilia:

And in the wood, where often you and I  
Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie,  
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,  
There my Lysander and myself shall meet;  
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,  
To seek new friends, and stranger companies.  
(1.1.214–19)

Before dawn comes to the forest, the "counsel" shared by Hermia and Helena, their "sisters' vows . . . school-days' friendship, childhood innocence" (3.2.198, 199, 202), have all been torn asunder, to be replaced at the end of the play by the primary demands and loyalties of wedlock. On the other hand, by dawn the hostilities between the two male youths have dissolved into "gentle concord" (4.1.142). From the

beginning of the play, the relationship between Lysander and Demetrius has been based upon aggressive rivalry for the same object of desire: first for Hermia, and then for Helena. Each youth must despise his previous mistress in order to adore the next; and a change in one's affections provokes a change in the other's. R. W. Dent has pointed out that the young women do not fluctuate in their desires for their young men, and that the ending ratifies their constant if inexplicable preferences.<sup>20</sup> It should be added that the maidens remain constant to their men at the cost of inconstancy to each other. If Lysander and Demetrius are flagrantly inconstant to Hermia and Helena, the pattern of their inconstancies nevertheless keeps them constant to each other. The romantic resolution transforms this constancy from one of rivalry to one of friendship by making each male to accept his own female. In Puck's charmingly crude formulation:

And the country proverb known,  
That every man should take his own,  
In your waking shall be shown:  
Jack shall have Jill,  
Nought shall go ill:  
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

(3.2.458-63)

At the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as at the end of *As You Like It*, the marital couplings dissolve the bonds of sisterhood at the same time that they forge the bonds of brotherhood.<sup>21</sup>

According to the paradigm of Northrop Frye, Shakespearean comedy "normally begins with an anticomic society, a social organization blocking and opposed to the comic drive, which the action of the comedy evades or overcomes. It often takes the form of a harsh or irrational law, like . . . the law disposing of rebellious daughters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. . . . Most of these irrational laws are preoccupied with trying to regulate the sexual drive, and so work counter to the wishes of the hero and heroine, which form the main impetus of the comic action."<sup>22</sup> Frye's account of Shakespearean comic action emphasizes intergenerational tension at the expense of those other forms of social and familial tension from which it is only artificially separable; in particular, he radically undervalues the centrality of sexual politics to these plays by unquestioningly identifying the heroines' interests with those of the heroes. The interaction of characters in the fictive societies of Shakespearean drama—like the interaction of persons in the society of Shakespeare's England—is structured by the complex interplay among culture-specific categories, not only of age and gender but also of kinship and class. The "drive toward a festive conclusion" (Frye, *A Natural Perspective*, p. 75) which liberates and unites comic heroes and heroines also subordinates wives to husbands and confers the responsibilities and privileges of manhood upon callow youths. What Frye calls "the main impetus" of Shakespearean comic action is not so much to liberate "the sexual

drive" from "irrational laws" as it is to fabricate a temporary accommodation between law and libido. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as in other Shakespearean comedies, the "drive toward a festive conclusion" is, specifically, a drive toward a wedding. And in its validation of marriage, the play is less concerned to sacramentalize libido than to socialize it.

In the opening scene, Egeus claims that he may do with Hermia as he chooses because she is his property: "As she is mine, I may dispose of her" (1.1.142). This claim is based upon a stunningly simple thesis: she is his because he has *made* her. Charging that Lysander has "stol'n the impression" (1.1.32) of Hermia's fantasy, Egeus effectively absolves his daughter from responsibility for her affections because he cannot acknowledge her capacity for volition. If she does not—cannot—obey him, then she should be destroyed. Borrowing Egeus' own imprinting metaphor, Theseus explains to Hermia the ontogenetic principle underlying her father's vehemence:

To you your father should be as a god:  
One that compos'd your beauties, yea, and one  
To whom you are but as a form in wax  
By him imprinted, and within his power  
To leave the figure or disfigure it.

(1.1.47–51)

Theseus represents paternity as a cultural act, an art: the father is a demiurge or *homo faber*, who composes, in-forms, imprints himself upon, what is merely inchoate matter. Conspicuously excluded from Shakespeare's play is the relationship between mother and daughter—the kinship bond through which Amazonian society reproduces itself. The mother's part is wholly excluded from this account of the making of a daughter. Hermia and Helena have no mothers; they have only fathers. The central female characters of Shakespeare's comedies are not mothers but mothers-to-be, maidens who are passing from fathers to husbands in a world made and governed by men.

In effect, Theseus' lecture on the shaping of a *daughter* is a fantasy of male parthenogenesis. Titania's votaress is the only biological mother in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. But she is an absent presence who must be evoked from Titania's memory because she has died in giving birth to a *son*. Assuming that they do not maim their sons, the Amazons are only too glad to give them away to their fathers. In Shakespeare's play, however, Oberon's paternal power must be directed against Titania's maternal possessiveness:

For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,  
Because that she as her attendant hath  
A lovely boy, stol'n from an Indian king—  
She never had so sweet a changeling;  
And jealous Oberon would have the child  
Knight of his train to trace the forest wild;



But she perforce withholds the loved boy,  
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy.  
(2.1.20–27)

A boy's transition from the female-centered world of his early childhood to the male-centered world of his youth is given a kind of phylogenetic sanction by myths recounting a cultural transition from matriarchy to patriarchy.<sup>23</sup> Such a myth is represented at the very threshold of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Theseus' defeat of the Amazonian matriarchate sanctions Oberon's attempt to take the boy from an infantilizing mother and to make a man of him. Yet "jealous" Oberon is not only Titania's rival for the child but also the child's rival for Titania: making the boy "all her joy," "proud" Titania withholds herself from her husband; she has "forsworn his bed and company" (2.1.62–63). Oberon's preoccupation is to gain possession, not only of the boy but of the woman's desire and obedience; he must master his own dependency upon his wife.<sup>24</sup>

Titania has her own explanation for her fixation upon the changeling:

His mother was a votress of my order  
And in the spiced Indian air, by night,  
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side;  
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,  
Marking th'embarked traders on the flood:  
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive  
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;  
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait  
Following (her womb then rich with my young squire),  
Would imitate, and sail upon the land  
To fetch me trifles, and return again  
As from a voyage rich with merchandise.  
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;  
And for her sake do I rear up her boy;  
And for her sake I will not part with him.  
(2.1.123–37)

Titania's attachment to the changeling boy embodies her attachment to the memory of his mother. What Oberon accomplishes by substituting Bottom for the boy is to break Titania's solemn vow. As in the case of the Amazons, or of Hermia and Helena, the play again enacts a male disruption of an intimate bond between women: first by the boy, and then by the man. It is as if, in order to be freed and enfranchised from the prison of the womb, the male child must *kill* his mother: "She, being mortal, of that boy did die." Titania's words suggest that mother and son are potentially mortal to each other: the matricidal infant complements the infanticidal Amazon. As is later the case with Bottom, Titania both dotes upon and dominates the child, attenuating his imprisonment to the womb: "And for her sake I will not part with

him.” Thus, within the changeling plot are embedded transformations of the male fantasies of motherhood which are figured in Amazonian myth.

Titania represents her bond to her votaress as one that is rooted in an experience of female fecundity, an experience for which men must seek merely mercantile compensations. The women “have laugh’d to see the sails conceive / And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind”; and the votaress has parodied such false pregnancies by sailing to fetch trifles while she herself bears riches within her very womb. The notion of maternity implied in Titania’s speech counterpoints the notion of paternity formulated by Theseus in the opening scene. In Theseus’ description, neither biological nor social mother—neither *genetrix* nor *mater*—plays a role in the making of a daughter; in Titania’s description, neither *genitor* nor *pater* plays a role in the making of a son. The father’s daughter is shaped from without; the mother’s son comes from within her body: Titania dwells upon the physical bond between mother and child, as manifested in pregnancy and parturition. Like an infant of the Elizabethan upper classes, however, the changeling is nurtured not by his natural mother but by a surrogate. By emphasizing her own role as a foster mother to her gossip’s offspring, Titania links the biological and social aspects of parenthood together within a wholly maternal world, a world in which the relationship between women has displaced the relationship between wife and husband. Nevertheless, despite the exclusion of a paternal role from Titania’s speech, Shakespeare’s embryological notions remain distinctly Aristotelian, distinctly phallogentric: the mother is represented as a *vessel*, as a container for her son; she is not his *maker*. In contrast, the implication of Theseus’ description of paternity is that the male is the only begetter; a daughter is merely a token of her father’s potency. Thus these two speeches may be said to formulate in poetic discourse, a proposition about the genesis of gender and power: men make women, and make themselves through the medium of women. Such a proposition reverses the Amazonian practice, in which women use men merely for their own reproduction. But much more than this, it seems an over-compensation for the *natural* fact that men do indeed come from women; an over-compensation for the *cultural* facts that consanguineal and affinal ties *between* men are established through mothers, wives, and daughters. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* dramatizes a set of claims which are repeated throughout Shakespeare’s canon: claims for a spiritual kinship among men that is unmediated by women; for the procreative powers of men; and for the autogeny of men.

It may be relevant to recall that what we tend to think of as the “facts of life” have been established as *facts* relatively recently in human history, with the development of microbiology that began in Europe in the late seventeenth century.<sup>25</sup> Of course, that seminal and menstrual fluids are in some way related to generation, and that people have both a father and a mother are hardly novel notions. My point is that, in Shakespeare’s age, they remained *merely* notions. Although biological maternity was readily apparent, biological paternity was a cultural construct for which ocular proof was unattainable. More specifically, the evidence for *unique* biological

paternity, for the physical link between a particular man and child, has always been exiguous. And, in Shakespearean drama, this link is frequently a focus of anxious concern, whether the concern is to validate paternity or to call it in question. Thus, Lear tells Regan that if she were *not* glad to see him, "I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb, / Sepulchring an adul'tress" (*King Lear*, 2.4.131–32). And Leontes exclaims, upon first meeting Florizel, "Your mother was most true to wedlock, Prince, / For she did print your royal father off, / Conceiving you" (*The Winter's Tale*, 5.1.124–26). In the former speech, a vulnerable father invokes his previously unacknowledged wife precisely when he wishes to repudiate his child; while in the latter, a vulnerable husband celebrates female virtue as the instrument of male self-reproduction.

The role of genetrix is self-evident but the role of genitor is not. As Launcelot Gobbo puts it, in *The Merchant of Venice*, "it is a wise father that knows his own child" (*MV*, 2.2.76–77). This consequence of biological asymmetry calls forth an explanatory—and compensatory—asymmetry in many traditional embryological theories: paternity is procreative, the formal and/or efficient cause of generation; maternity is nurturant, the material cause of generation. For example, according to *The Problemes of Aristotle*, a popular Elizabethan medical guide that continued to be revised and reissued well into the nineteenth century,

The seede [i.e., of the male] is the efficient beginning of the childe, as the builder is the efficient cause of the house, and therefore is not the materiall cause of the childe. . . . The seedes [i.e., both male and female] are shut and kept in the wombe: but the seede of the man doth dispose and prepare the seed of the woman to receive the forme, perfection, or soule, the which being done, it is converted into humiditie, and is fumed and breathed out by the pores of the matrix, which is manifest, because onely the flowers [i.e., the menses] of the woman are the materiall cause of the yong one.<sup>26</sup>

Conflating Aristotelian and Galenic notions, the text registers some confusion about the nature of the inseminating power and about its attribution to the woman as well as to the man. Although the contributions of both man and woman are necessary, the female seed is nevertheless materially inferior to that of the male. The notion of woman as an unperfected, an inadequate, imitation of man extends to the analogy of semen and menses: "The seede . . . is white in man by reason of his greate heate, and because it is digested better. . . . The seede of a woman is red . . . because the flowers is corrupt, undigested blood" (*Problemes of Aristotle*, sig. E3<sup>r</sup>). Whether in folk medicine or in philosophy, notions of maternity have a persistent natural or physical bias, while notions of paternity have a persistent social or spiritual bias. And such notions are articulated within a belief-system in which nature is subordinated to society, and matter is subordinated to spirit. The act of generation brings man and woman into a relationship that is both complementary and hierarchical. Thus, there exists a homology between the cultural construction of sexual generation and the social institution of marriage: genitor is to genetrix as husband is to wife.

While Shakespeare's plays reproduce these legitimating structures, they also reproduce challenges to their legitimacy. For, like the ubiquitous jokes and fears about cuckoldry to which they are usually linked, the frequent allusions within Shakespeare's texts to the incertitude of paternity point to a source of tension, to a potential contradiction, within the ostensibly patriarchal sex/gender system of Elizabethan culture. Oberon's epithalamium represents procreation as the union of man and woman, and marriage as a relationship of mutual affection:

To the best bride-bed will we,  
Which by us shall blessed be;  
And the issue there create  
Ever shall be fortunate.  
So shall all the couples three  
Ever true in loving be.

(5.1.389-94)

This benign vision is predicated upon the play's reaffirmation of the father's role in generation and the husband's authority over the wife. But at the same time that the play reaffirms essential elements of a patriarchal ideology, it also calls that reaffirmation in question; irrespective of authorial intention, the text intermittently undermines its own comic propositions. Oberon assures himself that, by the end of the play, "all things shall be peace" (3.2.377). But the continuance of the newlyweds' loves and the good fortune of their issue are by no means assured. Indeed, as soon as the lovers have gone off to bed, Puck begins to evoke an uncomic world of labor, fear, pain, and death (5.1.357-76). This invocation gives some urgency to Oberon's subsequent ritual blessing: the dangers are imminent and the peace is most fragile. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ends, not only with the creation of new children but with the creation of new mothers and new fathers; it ends upon the threshold of another generational cycle, which contains *in potentia* a renewal of the strife with which the play began. The status of "jealous" Oberon and "proud" Titania as personifications of forces in Nature at once sanctions and subverts the doctrine of domestic hierarchy. For, as personified in Shakespeare's fairies, the divinely ordained imperatives of Nature call attention to themselves as the humanly constructed imperatives of Culture: Shakespeare's naturalization and legitimation of the domestic economy deconstructs itself. The all-too-human struggle between the play's already married couple provides an ironic prognosis for the new marriages.

The promised end of romantic comedy is not only undermined by dramatic irony but also contaminated by a kind of inter-textual irony. The mythology of Theseus is filled with instances of terror, lust, and jealousy which are prominently recounted and censured by Plutarch in his *Life of Theseus* and in his subsequent comparison of Theseus with Romulus. Shakespeare uses Plutarch as his major source of Theseus-lore but does so highly selectively, excluding those events "not sorting with a nuptial ceremony" (5.1.55) nor with a comedy. Nevertheless, as

Harold Brooks' edition has now conclusively demonstrated, the text of Shakespeare's play is permeated by echoes not only of Plutarch's parallel lives of Theseus and Romulus but also of Seneca's *Hippolitus* and his *Medea*—by an archaeological record of the texts which shaped the poet's fantasy as he was shaping his play. Thus, sedimented within the verbal texture of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are traces of those forms of sexual and familial violence which the play would suppress: acts of bestiality and incest, of parricide, uxoricide, filicide, and suicide; sexual fears and urges erupting in cycles of violent desire—from Pasiphae and the Minotaur to Phaedra and Hippolitus. The seductive and destructive powers of women figure centrally in Theseus' career; and his habitual victimization of women, the chronicle of his rapes and disastrous marriages, is a discourse of anxious misogyny which persists as an echo within Shakespeare's text, no matter how much it has been muted or transformed.<sup>27</sup>

The play actually calls attention to the mechanism of mythological suppression by an ironically meta-dramatic gesture: Theseus demands "some delight" with which to "beguile / The lazy time" (5.1.40–41) before the bedding of the brides. The list of available entertainments includes "The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung / By an Athenian eunuch to the harp," as well as "The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals, / Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage" (5.1.44–45, 48–49). Theseus rejects both—because they are already too familiar. These brief scenarios encompass the extremes of reciprocal violence between the sexes. The first performance narrates a wedding that degenerates into rape and warfare; the singer and his subject—Athenian eunuch and phallic Centaur—are two antithetical kinds of male-monster. In the second performance, what was often seen as the natural inclination of women toward irrational behavior is manifested in the Maenads' terrible rage against Orpheus. The tearing and decapitation of the misogynistic Ur-Poet at once displaces and vivifies the Athenian singer's castration; and it also evokes the fate of Hippolytus, the misogynistic offspring of Theseus and Hippolyta. It is in its intermittent ironies, dissonances, and contradictions that the text of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* discloses—perhaps, in a sense, despite itself—that patriarchal norms are compensatory for the vulnerability of men to the powers of women.

#### IV

Such moments of textual disclosure also illuminate the interplay between sexual politics in the Elizabethan family and sexual politics in the Elizabethan monarchy: for the woman to whom *all* Elizabethan men were vulnerable was Queen Elizabeth herself. Within legal and fiscal limits, she held the power of life and death over every Englishman; the power to advance or frustrate the worldly desires of all her subjects. Her personality and personal symbolism helped to mold English culture and the consciousness of Englishmen for several generations.

Although the Amazonian metaphor might seem suited to strategies for praising a woman ruler, it was never popular among Elizabethan encomiasts.<sup>28</sup> Its associations must have been too sinister to suit the personal tastes and political interests of the Queen. However, Sir Walter Raleigh did boldly compare Elizabeth to the Amazons in his *Discoverie of Guiana*.<sup>29</sup> In his digression on the Amazons, who are reported to dwell “not far from Guiana,” Raleigh repeats the familiar details of their sexual and parental practices, and notes that they “are said to be very cruel and bloodthirsty, especially to such as offer to invade their territories” (p. 28). At the end of his narrative, Raleigh exhorts Elizabeth to undertake a conquest of Guiana:

Her Majesty heereby shall confirme and strengthen the opinions of al nations, as touching her great and princely actions. And where the south border of *Guiana* reacheth to the Dominion and Empire of the *Amazones*, those women shall heereby heare the name of a virgin, which is not onely able to defend her owne territories and her neighbors, but also to invade and conquere so great Emphyres and so farre removed (p. 120).

Raleigh’s strategy for convincing the Queen to advance his colonial enterprise is to insinuate that she is both like and unlike an Amazon; that Elizabethan imperialism threatens not only the Empire of the Guiana but the Empire of the Amazons; and that Elizabeth can definitively cleanse herself from contamination by the Amazons if she sanctions their subjugation. The Amazonomachy which Raleigh projects into the imaginative space of the New World is analogous to that narrated by Spenser within the imaginative space of Faeryland. Radigund, the Amazon Queen, can only be defeated by Britomart, the martial maiden who is Artegall’s betrothed and the fictional ancestress of Elizabeth. Radigund is Britomart’s double, split off from her as an allegorical personification of everything in Artegall’s beloved which threatens him. Having destroyed Radigund and liberated Artegall from his effeminate “thraldome,” Britomart reforms what is left of Amazon society: she

The liberty of women did repeale,  
Which they had long usurpt; and them restoring  
To mens subjection, did true Justice deale:  
That all they as a Goddess her adoring,  
Her wisdom did admire, and hearkned to her loring.  
(*FQ*, 5.7.42)

Unlike some of the popular sixteenth century forms of misrule so well discussed by Natalie Davis, this instance of sexual inversion, of Woman-on-Top, would seem to be intended as an exemplum “of order and stability in a hierarchical society,” which “can clarify the structure by the process of reversing it.”<sup>30</sup> For Raleigh’s Elizabeth, as for Spenser’s Britomart, the woman who has the prerogative of a goddess, who is authorized to be out of place, can best justify her authority by putting other women in their places.

A few paragraphs before Raleigh exhorts Elizabeth to undertake an Amazonomachy, he exhorts his gentlemen-readers to commit a cultural rape:

Guiana is a Countrey that hath yet her Maydenhead, never sackt, turned, nor wrought, the face of the earth hath not beene torne, nor the vertue and salt of the soyle spent by manurance, the graves have not beene opened for gold, the mines not broken with sledges, nor their Images puld down out of their temples. It hath never been entered by any armie of strength and never conquered and possessed by any Christian Prince (p. 115).

Raleigh's enthusiasm is, at one and the same time, for the unspoiled quality of this world and for the prospect of despoiling it. Guiana, like the Amazons, is fit to be wooed with the sword and won with injuries. Such metaphors have a peculiar resonance in the context of an address to Elizabeth. Certainly, it is difficult to imagine Raleigh using them to represent the plantation of Virginia, which had been named by and for the Virgin Queen. When, in the proem to the second book of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser conjoins "the Amazons huge river" and "fruitfullest Virginia" (*FQ*, 2.Proem.2), he is invoking not only two regions of the New World but two archetypes of Elizabethan culture: The engulfing Amazon and the nurturing Virgin. Later in the same book, they are conjoined again: Belpheobe, the beautiful virgin huntress who figures Queen Elizabeth in her body natural, is introduced into the poem with an extended blazon (*FQ*, 2.3.21–31) that insinuates sexual provocation into its encomium of militant chastity. The description concludes in a curiously ominous epic simile, in which the Amazonian image is at once celebrated and mastered: Belpheobe is compared both to the goddess Diana and to Penthesilea, "that famous Queene / Of Amazons, whom Pyrrhus did destroy" (*FQ*, 2.3.31). Women's bodies—and, in particular, the Queen's two bodies—provide a cognitive map for Elizabethan culture, a veritable matrix for the Elizabethan forms of desire.<sup>31</sup>

The Queen herself was too politic, and too ladylike, to wish to pursue the Amazonian image very far. Instead, she transformed it to suit her purposes, representing herself as an androgynous martial maiden, like Spenser's Britomart. Such was her appearance at Tilbury in 1588, where she had come to review her troops in expectation of a Spanish invasion. On that momentous occasion, she rode a white horse and dressed in white velvet; she wore a silver cuirass on her breast and carried a silver truncheon in her hand. The theme of her speech was by then already familiar to her listeners: she dwelt upon the womanly frailty of her body natural and the masculine strength of her body politic—a strength deriving from the love of her people, the virtue of her lineage, and the will of her God: "I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good will of my subjects. . . . I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too."<sup>32</sup> As the female ruler of what was, at least in theory, a patriarchal society, Elizabeth incarnated a contradiction at the very center of the Elizabethan sex/gender system. When Spenser's narrator moralizes on the negative example of the Amazons, he must be careful to provide himself with an escape clause at the end of his stanza:

Such is the crueltie of womenkynd  
When they have shaken off the shamefast band,

With which wise Nature did them strongly bynd,  
 T'obay the heasts of mens well ruling hand,  
 That then all rule and reason they withstand,  
 To purchase a licentious libertie.  
 But vertuous women wisely understand,  
 That they were borne to base humilitie,  
 Unlesse the heavens them lift to lawfull soveraintie.  
 (FQ, 5.5.25)

After the death of their royal mistress, Cecil wrote to Harington that she had been "more than a man, and, in troth, sometime less than a woman."<sup>33</sup> Queen Elizabeth was a cultural anomaly; and this anomalousness—at once divine and monstrous—made her powerful, and dangerous. By the skillful deployment of images that were at once awesome and familiar, this perplexing creature tried to mollify her male subjects while enhancing her authority over them.

At the beginning of her reign, Elizabeth formulated the strategy by which she turned the political liability of her gender to advantage for the next half century. She told her first parliaments that she was content to have as her epitaph "that a Queen, having reigned such a time, lived and died a virgin"; that her coronation ring betokened her marriage to her subjects; and that, although after her death her people might have many stepdames, yet they should never have "a more natural mother than [she] meant to be unto [them] all."<sup>34</sup> One way in which she actualized her maternal policy was to sponsor more than a hundred godchildren, the offspring of nobility and commoners alike.<sup>35</sup>

In his memorial of Elizabeth, Bacon epitomized her policy on gender and power:

The reigns of women are commonly obscured by marriage; their praises and actions passing to the credit of their husbands; whereas those that continue unmarried have their glory entire and proper to themselves. In her case this was more especially so; inasmuch as she had no helps to lean upon in her government, except such as she herself provided . . . no kinsmen of the royal family, to share her cares and support her authority. And even those whom she herself raised to honour she so kept in hand and mingled one with the other, that while she infused into each the greatest solicitude to please her, she was herself ever her own mistress.<sup>36</sup>

As Elizabeth herself reportedly told the Earl of Leicester, "I will have here but one Mistress, and no Master" (Naunton, *Fragmenta Regalia*, p. 17). To be her own mistress, her own master, the Queen had to be everyone's mistress and no one's. Lawrence Stone wryly remarks that "things were not easy for lovers at the Court of Elizabeth." She frequently intervened in the personal affairs of those who attended her, preventing or punishing courtships and marriages not to her liking. As Stone points out, "her objections were based partly . . . on a desire to preserve the Court as the focus of interest of every English man and woman of note. She was afraid, with reason, that marriage would create other interests and responsibilities, and replace



the attendance of both husband and wife upon her Court and upon herself."<sup>37</sup> It was this royal politics of centripetal force that Spenser imaged in the poem to his "leg-end . . . of Courtesie":

Then pardon me, most dreaded Sovereine,  
That from yourself I doe this vertue bring,  
And to your self doe it returne againe:  
So from the Ocean all rivers spring,  
And tribute backe repay as to their King.  
Right so from you all goodly vertues well  
Into the rest, which round about you ring,  
Faire Lords and Ladies, which about you dwell,  
And doe adorne your Court, where courtesies excell.  
(*FQ*, 6. Proem.7)

In a royal household comprising some fifteen hundred courtiers and retainers, the Queen's female entourage consisted of merely a dozen ladies of high rank—married or widowed—and half a dozen maids of honor from distinguished families, whose conduct was of almost obsessive interest to their mistress. Sir John Harington, the Queen's godson and an acute observer of her ways, wrote in a letter that "she did oft aske the ladies around hir chamber, If they lovede to thinke of marriage? And the wise ones did conceal well their liking hereto; as knowing the Queene's judgment in this matter." He goes on to relate an incident in which one of the maids of honor, "not knowing so deeply as hir fellowes, was asked one day hereof, and simply said—'she had thought muche about marriage, if her father did consent to the man she loved.' " Thereupon, the Queen obtained the father's consent that she should deal as she saw fit with her maid's desires. "The ladie was called in, and the Queene told her father had given his free consente. 'Then, replied the ladie, I shall be happie and please your Grace.'—'So thou shalte; but not to be a foole and marrye. I have his consente given to me, and I vow thou shalte never get it into thy possession. . . . I see thou art a bolde one, to owne thy foolishnesse so readilye.' "<sup>38</sup> The virgin Queen threatened her vestal with the prospect of living a barren sister all her life. Directly, in cases such as this, and indirectly through the operation of the Court of Wards, the Queen reserved to herself the traditional paternal power to give or withhold daughters. Among the aristocracy, marriage was not merely a legal and affective union between private persons but also a political and economic alliance between powerful families; it was an institution over which a careful and insecure monarch might well wish to exercise an absolute control. Behavior which, in the context of Elizabeth's body natural, may have been merely peevish or jealous was, in the context of her body politic, politic indeed.

Elizabeth's self-mastery and mastery of others were enhanced by an elaboration of her maidenhood into a cult of virginity which "allows of amorous admiration but prohibits desire" (Bacon, *In Felicem Memoriam*, p. 460); the displacement of her

wifely duties from a household to a nation; and the sublimation of her temporal and ecclesiastical authority into a nurturing maternity. She appropriated not only the suppressed cult of the Blessed Virgin but also the Tudor conception of the Ages of Woman. By fashioning herself into a singular combination of Maiden, Matron, and Mother, the Queen transformed the normal domestic life-cycle of an Elizabethan female into what was at once a social paradox and a religious mystery. Her emblem was the phoenix; her motto, *semper eadem*.<sup>39</sup> Because she was always uniquely herself, Elizabeth's rule was not intended to undermine the male hegemony of her culture. Indeed, the emphasis upon her *difference* from other women may have helped to reinforce it. As she herself wrote in response to Parliament in 1563, "though I can think [marriage] best for a private woman, yet I do strive with myself to think it not meet for a prince" (Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments 1559–1581*, p. 127). The royal exception could prove the patriarchal rule in society at large.

Nevertheless, from the very beginning of her reign, Elizabeth's parliaments and counselors urged her to marry and produce an heir. There was a deeply felt and loudly voiced need to insure a legitimate succession, upon which the welfare of the whole people depended. But there must also have been another, more obscure motivation behind these requests: the political nation, which was wholly a nation of men, seems at times to have found it frustrating or degrading to serve a female prince—a woman who was herself unsubjected to any man. Late in Elizabeth's reign, the French ambassador observed that "her government is fairly pleasing to the people, who show that they love her, but it is little pleasing to the great men and nobles; and if by chance she should die, it is certain that the English would never again submit to the rule of a woman" (De Maise, *Journal*, pp. 11–12). In the 1560s and 1570s, Elizabeth witnessed allegorical entertainments boldly criticizing her attachment to a life of "single blessedness." For example, in the famous Kenilworth entertainments sponsored by the Earl of Leicester in 1575, Diana praised the state of fancy-free maiden meditation and condemned the "wedded state, which is to thralldome bent." But Juno had the last word in the pageant: "O Queene, O worthy queene,/ Yet never wight felt perfect blis / But such as wedded beene."<sup>40</sup> By the 1580s, the Queen was past childbearing; Diana and her virginal nymph, Eliza, now carried the day in such courtly entertainments as Peele's *Araygnment of Paris*. Although "as fayre and lovely as the queene of Love," Peele's Elizabeth was also "as chaste as Dian in her chaste desires."<sup>41</sup> By the early 1590s, the cult of the unaging royal virgin had entered its last and most extravagant phase. In the 1590 Accession Day pageant, there appeared "a Pavilion . . . like unto the sacred Temple of the Virgins Vestal."<sup>42</sup> Upon the altar there were presents for the Queen—offerings from her votaries. At Elvetham, during the royal progress of 1591, none other than "the Fairy Queene" gave to Elizabeth a chaplet that she herself had received from "Auberon, the Fairy King" (Nichols, *Progresses and Public Processions*, 3:118–19). From early in the reign, Elizabeth had been directly engaged by such performances: debates were referred to her arbitration; the magic of her presence civilized savage men, restored the

blind to sight, released errant knights from enchantment, and rescued virgins from defilement. These social dramas of celebration and coercion played out the delicately balanced relationship between the monarch and her greatest subjects. And because texts and descriptions of most of them were in print within a year of their performance, they may have had a cultural impact far greater than their occasional and ephemeral character might at first suggest.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is permeated by images and devices that suggest these characteristic forms of Elizabethan court culture. However, whether or not its provenance was in an aristocratic wedding entertainment, Shakespeare's play is neither focused upon the Queen nor structurally dependent upon her presence or her intervention in the action.<sup>43</sup> On the contrary, it might be said to depend upon her absence, her exclusion. In the third scene of the play, after Titania has remembered her Indian votaress, Oberon remembers his "imperial votaress." He has once beheld

Flying between the cold moon and the earth,  
Cupid all arm'd; a certain aim he took  
At a fair vestal, throned by the West,  
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow  
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts.  
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft  
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon;  
And the imperial votress passed on,  
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.  
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:  
It fell upon a little western flower,  
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound:  
And maidens call it 'love-in-idleness'.

...

The juice of it, on sleeping eyelids laid,  
Will make or man or woman madly dote  
Upon the next live creature that it sees.

(2.1.156-68, 170-72)

The evocative monologues of Titania and Oberon are carefully matched and contrasted: the fairy queen speaks of a mortal mother from the east; the fairy king speaks of an invulnerable virgin from the west. Their memories express two myths of origin: Titania's provides a genealogy for the changeling and an explanation of why she will not part with him; Oberon's provides an aetiology of the metamorphosed flower which he will use to make her part with him. The floral symbolism of female sexuality begun in this passage is completed when Oberon names "Dian's bud" (4.1.72) as the antidote to "love-in-idleness." With Cupid's flower, Oberon can make the Fairy Queen "full of hateful fantasies" (2.1.258); and with Dian's bud, he can win her back to his will. The vestal's invulnerability to fancy is doubly instrumental to Oberon in his reaffirmation of romantic, marital, and par-

ental norms that have been inverted during the course of the play. Thus, Shakespeare's royal compliment re-mythologizes the cult of the Virgin Queen in such a way as to sanction a relationship of gender and power that is personally and politically inimical to Elizabeth.

Unlike the fair vestal, Shakespeare's comic heroines are in a transition between the states of maidenhood and wifehood, daughterhood and motherhood. These transitions are mediated by the wedding rite and the act of defloration, which are brought together at the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: when the newlyweds have retired for the night, Oberon and Titania enter the court in order to bless the "bride-bed" where the marriages are about to be consummated. By the act of defloration, the husband takes physical and symbolic possession of his bride. The sexual act in which the man draws blood from the woman is already implicit, at the beginning of the play, in Theseus' vaunt: "Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword, / And won thy love doing thee injuries." The impending injury is evoked—and dismissed with laughter—in the play-within-the-play which wears away the hours "between our after-supper and bedtime" (5.1.34): Pyramus finds Thisbe's mantle "stain'd with blood," and concludes that "lion vile hath here deflower'd [his] dear" (5.1.272, 281). The image in which Oberon describes the flower's metamorphosis suggests the immanence of defloration in the very origin of desire: "the bolt of Cupid fell / . . . Upon a little western flower, / Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound." Cupid's shaft violates the flower when it has been deflected from the vestal: Oberon's purple passion flower is procreated in a displaced and literalized defloration.<sup>44</sup> Unlike the female *dramatis personae*, Oberon's vestal virgin is *not* subject to Cupid's shaft, to the frailties of the flesh and the fancy. Nor is she subject to the mastery of men. Isolated from the experiences of desire, marriage and maternity, she is immune to the pains and pleasure of human mutability. But it is precisely her bodily and mental impermeability which make possible Oberon's pharmacopoeia. Thus, ironically, the vestal's very freedom from fancy guarantees the subjection of others. She is necessarily excluded from the erotic world of which her own chastity is the efficient cause.

Within *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the public and domestic domains of Elizabethan culture intersect in the figure of the imperial votaress. When a female ruler is ostensibly the virgin mother of her subjects, then the themes of male procreative power, autogeny, and mastery of women acquire a seditious resonance. In royal pageantry, the Queen is always the cynosure; her virginity is the source of magical potency. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, however, magical power is invested in the King. Immediately after invoking the royal vestal and vowing to torment the Fairy Queen, Oberon encounters Helena in pursuit of Demetrius. In Shakespeare's metamorphosis of Ovid, "the story shall be chang'd / Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase" (2.1.230–31). Oberon's response is neither to extinguish desire nor to make it mutual but to restore the normal pattern of pursuit: "Fare thee well, nymph; ere he do leave this grove / Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love" (2.1.245–

46). Perhaps three or four years before the first production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in a pastoral entertainment enacted at Sudeley during the royal progress of 1591, the Queen's presence had changed Ovid's story into an emblem of Constancy. The scenario might be seen as a benevolent mythological transformation of the Queen's sometimes spiteful ways with her maids of honor. Here it was in the power of the royal virgin to undo the metamorphosis, to *release* Daphne from her arboreal imprisonment and to protect her from the lustful advances of Apollo.<sup>45</sup> Unlike Elizabeth, Oberon uses his mastery over Nature to subdue others to their passions. The festive conclusion of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* depends upon the success of a process by which the female pride and power manifested in misanthropic warriors, possessive mothers, unruly wives, and willful daughters are brought under the control of lords and husbands. When the contentious young lovers have been sorted out into pairs by Oberon, then Theseus can invite them to share his own wedding day. If the Duke finally overbears Egeus' will (4.1.178), it is because the father's obstinate claim to "the ancient privilege of Athens" (1.1.41) threatens to obstruct the very process by which Athenian privilege and Athens itself are reproduced. Hermia and Helena are granted their desires—but those desires have themselves been shaped by a social imperative. Thus, neither for Oberon nor for Theseus does a contradiction exist between mastering the desires of a wife and patronizing the desires of a maiden. In the assertion of an equivalence between the patriarchal family and the patriarchal state, the anomalous Elizabethan relationship between gender and power is suppressed.

In his letters, Sir John Harington wrote of Elizabeth as "oure deare Queene, my royale godmother, and this state's natural mother"; as "one whom I both lovede and fearede too." After her death, he reflected slyly on how she had manipulated the filial feelings of her subjects: "Few knew how to aim their shaft against her cunninge. We did all love hir, for she saide she loved us, and muche wysdome she shewed in this matter."<sup>46</sup> So much for Elizabeth's maternal strategies. As for her erotic strategies, Bacon provides perhaps the most astute contemporary analysis:

As for those lighter points of character,—as that she allowed herself to be wooed and courted, and even to have love made to her; and liked it; and continued it beyond the natural age for such vanities;—if any of the sadder sort of persons be disposed to make a great matter of this, it may be observed that there is something to admire in these very things, which ever way you take them. For if viewed indulgently, they are much like the accounts we find in romances, of the Queen in the blessed islands, and her court and institutions, who allows of amorous admiration but prohibits desire. But if you take them seriously, they challenge admiration of another kind and of a very high order; for certain it is that these dalliances detracted but little from her fame and nothing from her majesty, and neither weakened her power nor sensibly hindered her business.

(*In Felicem Memoriam*, p. 460)

Bacon appreciates that the Queen's personal vanity and political craft are mutually reinforcing. He is alert to the generic affinities of the royal cult, its appropriation

and enactment of the conventions of romance. And he also recognizes that, like contemporaneous romantic fictions, the Queen's romance could function as a political allegory. However, symbolic forms may do more than *represent* power: they may actually help to *generate* the power that they represent. Thus—although Bacon does not quite manage to say so—the Queen's dalliances did not weaken her power but strengthened it; did not hinder her business but furthered it.

By the same token, the Queen's subjects might put the discourse of royal power to their own uses. Consider the extravagant royal entertainment of 1581, in which Philip Sidney and Fulke Greville performed as "Foster Children of Desire."<sup>47</sup> "Nourished up with [the] infective milke" (p. 313) of Desire—"though full oft that dry nurse Dispaier indevered to wainne them from it" (p. 314)—the Foster Children boldly claimed and sought to possess The Fortress of Perfect Beauty, an allegorical structure from within which Elizabeth actually beheld the "desirous assault" (p. 317) mounted against her. The besieged Queen was urged that she "no longer exclude vertuous Desire from perfect Beautie" (p. 314). During two days of florid speeches, spectacular self-displays, and mock combats, these young, ambitious, and thwarted courtiers acted out a fantasy of political demand, rebellion, and submission in metaphors of resentment and aggression that were alternately filial and erotic. They seized upon the forms in which their culture had articulated the relationship between sovereign and subjects: they demanded sustenance from their royal mother, favors from their royal mistress. The nobility, gentlemen, and hangers-on of the court generated a variety of pressures that constantly threatened the fragile stability of the Elizabethan regime. At home, personal rivalries and political dissent might be sublimated into the agonistic play-forms of courtly culture; abroad, they might be expressed in warfare and colonial enterprise—displaced into the conquest of lands that had yet their maidenheads.

The Queen dallied, not only with the hearts of courtiers but with the hearts of commoners, too. For example, in 1600, a deranged sailor named Abraham Edwardes sent "a passionate . . . letter unto her Majesty," who was then sixty-eight years old. Edwardes was later committed to prison "for drawing his dagger in the [royal] presence chamber." The Clerk of the Privy Council wrote to Cecil that "the fellow is greatly distracted, and seems rather to be transported with a humour of love, than any purpose to attempt anything against her Majesty." He recommended that this poor lunatic and lover "be removed to Bedlam."<sup>48</sup> By her own practice of sexual politics, the Queen may very well have encouraged the sailor's passion—in the same sense that her cult helped to fashion the courtly performances and colonial enterprises of courtiers like Sidney or Raleigh, the dream-life of Doctor Forman, the dream-play of Master Shakespeare. This being said, it must be added that the Queen was as much the creature of her image as she was its creator, that her power to fashion her own strategies was itself fashioned by her culture and constrained within its mental horizon.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as in *The Faerie Queene*, the ostensible project of elaborating Queen Elizabeth's personal my-

thology inexorably subverts itself—generates ironies, contradictions, resistances which undo the royal magic. Such processes of disenchantment are increasingly evident in Elizabethan cultural productions of the 1580s and 1590s. The texts of Spenser and other Elizabethan courtly writers often fragment the royal image, reflecting aspects of the Queen “in mirroures more then one” (*FQ*, 3.Proem.5). In a similar way, Shakespeare’s text splits the triune Elizabethan cult image between the fair vestal, an unattainable *virgin*; and the Fairy Queen, an intractable *wife* and a dominating *mother*. Oberon uses one against the other in order to reassert male prerogatives. Thus, the structure of Shakespeare’s comedy symbolically neutralizes the forms of royal power to which it ostensibly pays homage. It would be an oversimplification and a distortion to characterize such cultural processes merely as an allegorical encoding of political conflict. The spiritual, maternal, and erotic transformations of Elizabethan power are not reducible to instances of Machiavellian policy, to intentional mystifications. Relationships of power and dependency, desire and fear, are inherent in both the public and domestic domains. Sexual and family experience were invariably politicized; economic and political experience were invariably eroticized: the social and psychological force of Elizabethan symbolic forms depended upon a thorough conflation of these domains.

## V

Differences within the courtly and fairy groups of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* are structured principally in terms of gender and generation. When Bottom and his company are introduced into the newly harmonized courtly milieu in the final scene, the striking difference *between* groups overshadows the previously predominant differences *within* groups.<sup>50</sup> Like Bottom, in his special relationship to Titania, the mechanicals are presented collectively in a child-like relationship to their social superiors. (They characterize themselves, upon two occasions, as “every mother’s son” [1.2.73; 3.1.69]; however, they hope to be “made men” [4.2.18] by the patronage of the Duke.) But differences of gender and generation have now been reorganized in terms of a difference which is at once social and theatrical: a difference between common artisan-actors and the leisured elite for whom they perform. In the mechanicals’ play, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* internalizes and distances its relationship to traditions of amateur and occasional dramatic entertainment. And in the attitudes of the play-within-the-play’s courtly audience, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* internalizes and distances its relationship to the pressures and constraints of aristocratic patronage. By incorporating and ironically circumscribing it, Shakespeare’s professional theatre implicitly repudiates Theseus’ attitude toward the entertainers’ art: that performances should serve only as an innocuous distraction from princely cares or as a gratifying homage to princely power.<sup>51</sup> In this dramatic context, Duke Theseus is not so much Queen Elizabeth’s *masculine* antithesis as he is her *princely* surrogate.

The much-noted “metadrama” of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*—its calling of attention to its own artifice, its own artistry—analagizes the powers of parents, princes, and playwrights; the fashioning of children, subjects, and plays. Shakespeare’s text is a cultural production in which the processes of cultural production are themselves represented; it is a representation of fantasies about the shaping of the family, the polity, and the theatre. When Oberon blesses the bride-beds of “the couples three” (5.1.393), he metaphorizes the engendering of their offspring as an act of *writing*: “And the blots of Nature’s hand / Shall not in their issue stand” (5.1.395–96). And when Theseus wryly describes the poet’s “fine frenzy” (5.1.12), the text of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* obliquely represents the parthenogenetic process of its *own* creation:

And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

(5.1.14–17)

That the dramatic medium itself is thematized in Shakespeare’s play does not imply a claim for the self-referentiality of the aesthetic object or the aesthetic act. On the contrary, it implies a claim for a dialectic between Shakespeare’s profession and his society, a dialectic between the theatre and the world.<sup>52</sup> In its preoccupation with the transformation of the personal into the public, the metamorphosis of dream and fantasy into poetic drama, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* does more than *analogize* the powers of prince and playwright: it dramatizes—or, rather, *meta*-dramatizes—the relations of power *between* prince and playwright. To the extent that the cult of Elizabeth informs the play, it is itself transformed within the play. The play bodies forth the theatre poet’s contest, not only with the generativity of Elizabethan mothers but with the generativity of the royal virgin; it contests the princely claim to cultural authorship and social authority. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is, then, in a double sense, a *creation* of Elizabethan culture: for it also creates the culture by which it is created, shapes the fantasies by which it is shaped, begets that by which it is begotten.<sup>53</sup>

## Notes

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1. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (MND), 5.1.7–8, 4–6. All quotations will follow *The Arden Shakespeare* edition of MND, ed. Harold F. Brooks (London, 1979), and will be cited in the text by act, scene, and line. Quotations from other Shakespearean plays follow the texts in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, G. Blakemore Evans, textual ed. (Boston, 1974).



2. The character of cultural practices as at once constituted and constituting, structured and structuring, has been provocatively discussed from a variety of perspectives in recent social theory. Now Fredric Jameson challenges us to rewrite "the literary text in such a way that the latter may itself be seen as a rewriting or restructuration of a prior historical or ideological *subtext*, it being understood that that 'subtext' is not immediately present as such, not some common-sense external reality . . . but rather must itself always be (re)constructed after the fact. . . . The symbolic act therefore begins by generating and producing its own context in the same moment of emergence in which it steps back from it, taking its measure with a view toward its own projects of transformation. The whole paradox of what we have called the subtext may be summed up in this, that the literary work or cultural object, as though for the first time, brings into being that very situation to which it is also, at one and the same time, a reaction. It articulates its own situation and textualizes it" (*The Political Unconscious* [Ithaca, N.Y., 1981], pp. 81–82). The present essay explores how the text of *MND* restructures its ideological subtext.
3. Paul A. Olson, "A *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the Meaning of Court Marriage," *English Literary History*, 24 (1957), 95–119 [hereafter *E.L.H.*]. Olson is not concerned with the social realities of Elizabethan court marriage (which will be touched on below) but with prescriptive Renaissance theories of marriage and gender, theories toward which his own perspective is wholly uncritical. For an ahistorical feminist reading of the play as an affirmation of "patriarchal order and hierarchy," see Shirley Nelson Garner, "A *Midsummer Night's Dream*: 'Jack shall have Jill;/Nought shall go ill,'" *Women's Studies*, 9 (1981), 47–63.
4. See Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter (New York, 1975), pp. 157–210. Among numerous other studies, see the following theoretical overviews: Ellen Ross and Rayna Rapp, "Sex and Society: A Research Note from Social History and Anthropology," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 23(1981), 51–72; and J. S. La Fontaine, "The Domestication of the Savage Male," *Man*, n. s. 16(1981), 333–49. A sense of the variety and complexity of sex/gender systems can be gained from two recent ethnographic collections: *Nature, culture and gender*, ed. Carol P. MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern (Cambridge, Eng., 1980); and *Sexual Meanings: The Social Construction of Gender and Sexuality*, ed. Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (Cambridge, Eng., 1981). For an introduction to the construction of one gender in European intellectual history, see Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (Cambridge, Eng., 1980).
5. Quoted from manuscript in A. L. Rowse, *The Case Books of Simon Forman* (London, 1974), p. 31.
6. Excerpts from Forman's autobiography, diaries, and notes are printed in Rowse, *Case Books*, pp. 272–307. I quote from pp. 273, 276.
7. See C. L. Barber, "The Family in Shakespeare's Development: Tragedy and Sacredness," in *Representing Shakespeare*, ed. Murray M. Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn (Baltimore, 1980), pp. 188–202; quotation from p. 196.
8. Compare Arthur F. Marotti, "Countertransference, the Communication Process, and the Dimensions of Psychoanalytic Criticism," *Critical Inquiry*, 4:3 (Spring 1978), 471–89; p. 486: "A sociocultural system not only inculcates certain ideals, values, sublimations—that is, superego and ego formations—but also . . . the very shapes of ('instinctive') desire and need. . . . Cultural style, like personal style, has superego, ego, and id dimensions. Its ordering principle operates on an unconscious level."

9. André Hurault, Sieur de Maisse, *Journal* (1597), trans. and ed., G. B. Harrison and R. A. Jones (Bloomsbury, 1931), pp. 25–26.
10. “Extracts from Paul Hentzner’s Travels in England, 1598,” in *England as seen by Foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth & James the First*, ed. William Brenchley Rye (1865; rpt., New York, 1967), pp. 104–105.
11. In Spenser’s description of the matronly Charissa, “Her necke and breasts were ever open bare, / That ay thereof her babes might sucke their fill” (*FQ*, 1.10.30). *The Faerie Queene* is quoted from the often-reprinted *Oxford Standard Authors* edition of Spenser’s *Poetical Works*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (Oxford, 1912), and is cited by book, canto, and stanza; in quotations from this and other Elizabethan texts, I have silently modernized obsolete typographical conventions. The female pelican is said to pierce her breast in order to feed or revive her young. The so-called Pelican Portrait of Queen Elizabeth (ca. 1575; attrib. to Nicholas Hilliard) is reproduced in Roy Strong, *The English Icon: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture* (London, 1969), p. 161, which includes a detail of the pendant.
12. Sir Robert Naunton, *Fragmenta Regalia* (written ca. 1630; printed 1641), ed. Edward Arber (1870; rpt., New York, 1966), p. 51. George Puttenham expresses the Queen’s metaphorical motherhood in a curious conceit: “Out of her breast as from an eye, / Issue the rayes incessantly / Of her justice, bountie, and might” (*The Arte of English Poesie* [1589], ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker [Cambridge, Eng., 1936], p. 100).
13. I use this term advisedly, to describe a specific household organization in which authority resides in a male “head”: husband, father, and master of servants and apprentices. According to Lawrence Stone, “the period from 1530 to 1660 may . . . be regarded as the patriarchal stage in the evolution of the nuclear family” (*The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800* [New York, 1977], p. 218). In an extended discussion (pp. 123–218, *et passim*), Stone links this stage to the centralization of political authority in England. Also see Gordon J. Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought* (New York, 1975), pp. 37–98.
14. William Painter, *The Palace of Pleasure* (1575), ed. Joseph Jacobs, 3 vols. (1890; rpt., New York, 1966), vol. 2, pp. 159–61. Future page citations will be to volume 2 of this edition. For a sense of the ubiquity of Amazonian representations in Elizabethan culture, see the valuable survey by Celeste Turner Wright: “The Amazons in Elizabethan Literature,” *Studies in Philology*, 37 (1940), 433–56.
15. *An Elizabethan in 1582: The Diary of Richard Madox, Fellow of All Souls*, ed. Elizabeth Story Donno, Hakluyt Society, second ser., no. 47 (London, 1977), p. 183. I owe this reference to Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980), p. 181.
16. The linkage of Amazon, witch, and cannibal exemplifies a logic of inversion ingrained in European categories of thought. It has been suggested recently that sixteenth and seventeenth century witchcraft beliefs were a coherent, meaningful, and indeed necessary component of a larger intellectual system based upon principles of hierarchy, opposition, and inversion. This system linked together demonism, political sedition and rebellion, and female misrule as inversions of the divinely sanctioned order in the cosmos, state, and family. See Stuart Clark, “Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft,” *Past & Present*, no. 87 (May 1980), 98–127. It is worth noting that intimations and denials of witchcraft and demonism form a persistent undercurrent in *MND*. Oberon insists that he and Puck “are spirits of another sort” (3.2.388) than the damned. However, the play is rich in intertextual allusions to the female witches of the classical world: Puck invokes “the triple Hecate’s team” (5.1.370); and in its metamorphoses and its descriptions of

elemental disorder—in its action and in its language—the play evokes the Meroë of Apuleius and the Medea of Ovid and Seneca. Furthermore, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in two of its three occurrences (*Met.*, 14.382, 438), "Titania" is an epithet for Circe. As exemplars of the demonic—and explicitly sexual—power of women, these witches logically share a place with the Amazons in the man-made sex/gender system of *MND*.

17. It has been suggested recently that "the English Renaissance institutionalized, where it did not invent, the restrictive marriage-oriented attitude toward women that feminists have been struggling against ever since. . . . The insistent demand for the right—nay, obligation—of women to be happily married arose as much in reaction against women's intractable pursuit of independence as it did in reaction against Catholic ascetic philosophy." See Linda T. Fitz, "What Says the Married Woman?" *Marriage Theory and Feminism in the English Renaissance*, *Mosaic*, 13:2 (Winter 1980), 1–22; quotations from pp. 11, 18. On the concept of woman-as-property in English social and legal history, see Keith Thomas, "The Double Standard," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 20 (1959), 195–216.
18. André Thevet, *The newe founde Worlde*, trans. (London: Henrie Bynneman for Thomas Hackett, 1568), p. 102<sup>r</sup>.
19. Plutarch, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes*, trans. Thomas North (1579), the Tudor Translations, 2 vols. (1895; rpt., New York, 1967), vol. 1, p. 116. Further page references will be to volume 1 of this edition. Plutarch reports that Antiopa (conflated with Hippolyta) was not conquered in an Amazonomachy but was captured by Theseus with "deceit and stealth" (p. 55).
20. Robert W. Dent, "Imagination in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 15 (1964), 115–29; see p. 116. On the permutations of desire among the lovers of *MND*, see René Girard, "Myth and Ritual in Shakespeare: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," in *Textual Strategies*, ed. Josué V. Harari (Ithaca, 1979), pp. 189–212. On the relationship of Hermia and Helena, see the discussion in James L. Calderwood, *Shakespearean Metadrama* (Minneapolis, 1971), p. 126.
21. For a detailed analysis, see Louis Adrian Montrose, "'The Place of a Brother' in *As You Like It*: Social Process and Comic Form," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 32 (1981), 28–54.
22. Northrop Frye, *A Natural Perspective* (New York, 1965), pp. 73–74.
23. See Joan Bamberger, "The Myth of Matriarchy: Why Men Rule in Primitive Society," in *Woman, Culture and Society*, ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford, 1974), pp. 262–80; esp. pp. 266, 277.
24. Some of the play's (male) critics approve Oberon's actions as undertaken in the best interests of a growing boy and a neurotic mother. Two of the play's most rewarding critics must be included among them: See C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (Princeton, 1959), pp. 119–62, esp. p. 137; Calderwood, *Shakespearean Metadrama*, pp. 120–48, esp. p. 125.
25. The following discussion is much indebted to J. A. Barnes, "Genetrix : Genitor :: Nature : Culture?" in *The Character of Kinship*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge, Eng., 1973), pp. 61–73. On the history of embryological theory, I have found the following useful: F. J. Cole, *Early Theories of Sexual Generation* (Oxford, 1930); Joseph Needham, *A History of Embryology*, 2nd ed., rev. (New York, 1959); Maryanne Cline Horowitz, "Aristotle and Woman," *Journal of the History of Biology*, 9 (1976), 183–213; Peter J. Bowler, "Prenatal and Pre-existence in the Seventeenth Century: A Brief Analysis," *Journal of the History of Biology*, 4 (1971), 221–44.
26. *The Problemes of Aristotle, with other Philosophers and Phisitions* (London: Arnold Hatfield, 1597), sigs. E3<sup>r</sup>–E4<sup>r</sup>.

27. For a review and analysis of the play's sources and analogues, see Brooks' edition, pp. lviii–lxxxviii; 129–53; and the notes throughout the text. D'Orsay W. Pearson, "Vnkinde Theseus: A Study in Renaissance Mythography," *English Literary Renaissance*, 4 (1974), 276–98, provides a richly informative survey of Theseus' "classical, medieval, and Renaissance image as an unnatural, perfidious, and unfaithful lover and father" (p. 276).

Many details in the texts of Plutarch and Seneca that have not been considered previously as "sources" for Shakespeare's play are nevertheless relevant to the problem of gender and filiation which seems to me to be central to *MND*. Here I can do no more than enumerate a few of these details. In his *Lives*, Plutarch relates that Theseus was "begotten by stealth, and out of lawful matrimony" (p. 30); that, "of his father's side," he was descended from the "Autochthones, as much to say, as borne of them selves" (p. 30); that, having been abandoned by Theseus on Cyprus, the pregnant Ariadne "dyed . . . in labour, and could never be delivered" (p. 48); that, because the negligently joyful Theseus forgot to change his sail as a sign of success upon his return from Crete, his father Egeus, "being out of all hope evermore to see his sonne againe, tooke such a griefe at his harte, that he threw him selfe headlong from the top of a clyffe, and killed him selfe" (p. 49).

In Seneca, as in Plutarch, the mother of Hippolytus is named Antiopa; Shakespeare's choice of the alternative—Hippolyta—obviously evokes Hippolytus, thus providing an ironic context for the royal wedding and the blessing of the bridal bed. (Similarly, the choice of the name of Egeus for the Athenian patriarch whose will is overborne by Theseus effects a displacement within Shakespeare's comedy of Theseus' negligent parricide.) Seneca's *Hippolytus* emphasizes Theseus' abuse of women—by this time, he has killed Antiopa/Hippolyta, married Phaedra, and gone off to the underworld to rape Persephone—and also gives voice to his victims in the invective of Phaedra. Hippolytus, as Phaedra's *nutrix* reminds him, is the only living son of the Amazons (577; here and following, *Seneca's Tragedies* are cited by line numbers from the Latin text in the Loeb edition, ed. F. J. Miller). In his very misogyny—his scorn of marriage, and his self-dedication to virginity, hunting, and the cult of Diana—Hippolytus proves himself his mother's son; he is "*genus Amazonium*" (231). Hippolytus reminds Phaedra that she has come from the same womb that bore the Minotaur; and that she is even worse than her mother, Pasiphae (688–93). At the end of the play, Theseus' burden is to refashion ("*figit*") his son from the "*disiecta . . . membra*" of his torn body (1256–70). Now a filicide, as well as a parricide and uxoricide, Theseus has perverted and destroyed his own house (1166).

Seneca's *Medea* is clearly relevant to the subtext of *MND* in its domestic violence: in *Medea*'s betrayal of her father; in the *sparagmos* of her brother; and, after Jason's unfaithfulness, in her slaughter of their two sons. But *Medea* also has a significant place in the history of Theseus, as recorded by Plutarch (*Lives*, p. 39) and by Seneca (*Hippolytus*, 696–97): fleeing Corinth after destroying Creusa and her own two boys, *Medea* sought asylum in Athens with old Egeus, whose power to beget offspring she promised to renew by her magic. Finding that young Theseus had come to Athens in disguise, *Medea* sought unsuccessfully to trick the suspicious Egeus into poisoning his own son. Thus, as Seneca's Hippolytus points out, *Medea* has been to his father what Phaedra is to himself: the demonic, barbaric, passionate female who seeks to pervert the bonds between father and son, man and man.

28. See Winfried Schleiner, "Divina virago: Queen Elizabeth as an Amazon," *Studies in Philology*, 75 (1978), 163–80.

29. *The Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guiana* (1596), ed. Sir Robert H. Schomburgk, Hakluyt Society, first ser., no. 3 (1848; rpt., New York, n.d.). References will be to this edition. For a splendid account of the place of this text in Raleigh's courtly fortunes, see Stephen J. Greenblatt, *Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and His Roles* (New Haven, 1973), pp. 99–126.
30. See Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975), p. 130. Davis' own argument is that inversion phenomena may not only act as safety valves which renew the existing structures but as sources of cultural innovation and social change.
31. In the *Letter* to Raleigh that was printed with the first three books of *The Faerie Queene* in 1590, Spenser writes that, "considering [Elizabeth] beareth two persons, the one of a most royall Queene or Empresse, the other of a most vertuous and beautiful Lady" (*Poetical Works*, p. 407), it is necessary to allegorize her various qualities in terms of various fictional personages. On the legal, political, and dramatic aspects of the doctrine that the Queen had a body politic and a body natural, see Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies* (London, 1977). On the human body as the primary symbolic medium for the articulation of social relations, see the essential studies by Mary Douglas: *Purity and Danger* (London, 1966); and *Natural Symbols* (London, 1970). For a study of the female body strongly influenced by the work of Douglas, see Kirsten Hastrup, "The Semantics of Biology: Virginity," in *Defining Females*, ed. Shirley Ardener (London, 1978), pp. 49–65.
32. Quoted in Paul Johnson, *Elizabeth I: A Study in Power and Intellect* (London, 1974), p. 320. Contemporary representations of the event are quoted and discussed in Schleiner, "Divina Virago."
33. Sir Robert Cecil to Sir John Harington, 29 May, 1603, printed in John Harington, *Nugae Antiquae*, 3 vols. (1779; rpt., Hildesheim, 1968), vol. 2, p. 264. On legal and literary representations of gynocracy in the sixteenth century, see James E. Phillips, "The Background of Spenser's Attitude Toward Women Rulers" and "The Woman Ruler in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 5 (1942), 5–32 and 211–34, respectively.
34. See J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments 1559–1581* (New York, 1958), pp. 49, 109. Neale prints the full texts of these speeches.
35. See Neville Williams, *Elizabeth, Queen of England* (London, 1967), p. 218.
36. In *Felicem Memoriam Elizabethae* (ca. 1608), in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding et al., 15 vols. (Boston, 1860), vol. 11, pp. 425–42 (Latin text), 443–61 (English trans.); quotation from p. 450. Future page citations will be to volume 11 of this edition.
37. See Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558–1641* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 605–606. Stone gives numerous examples of the Queen's interventions.
38. Letter to Robert Markham (1606), rpt. in *The Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harington*, ed. N. E. McClure (Philadelphia, 1930), p. 124. For details of the royal household, see Williams, *Elizabeth, Queen of England*, pp. 214–30.
39. The policy and iconography of the royal cult are studied in Frances A. Yates, *Astraea* (London, 1975), pp. 29–120, 215–19; Roy Strong, *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, 1963); and Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth* (London, 1977). Also see E. C. Wilson, *England's Eliza* (1939; rpt., London, 1966), for the literary idealizations of the Queen; and Louis Adrian Montrose, "'Eliza, Queene of Shepheardes', and the Pastoral of Power," *English Literary Renaissance*, 10 (1980), 153–82, on pastoral metaphors and royal power.

40. I quote the printed text of the Kenilworth entertainment (1576) from *The Complete Works of George Gascoigne*, ed. J. W. Cunliffe, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Eng. 1910), vol. 2, pp. 107, 120.
41. George Peele, *The Araygnment of Paris* (printed 1584), ed. R. Mark Benbow, in *The Dramatic Works of George Peele*, C. T. Prouty, gen. ed. (New Haven, 1970), lines 1172–73. See Louis Adrian Montrose, “Gifts and Reasons: The Contexts of Peele’s *Araygnement of Paris*,” *ELH*, 47 (1980), 433–61.
42. Described in Sir William Segar, *Honor Military, and Civill* (1602), pp. 197–200; rpt. in John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, 3 vols. (1823; rpt. New York, 1966), 3:41–50; quotation from Nichols, 3:46. One of the most popular iconographic attributes of Queen Elizabeth is the sieve, which identifies her with the vestal virgin Tuccia. See Strong, *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, paintings nos. 43–49, pp. 66–69; Yates, *Astraea*, pp. 112–20.
43. Compare G. K. Hunter, *John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier* (London, 1962), p. 330. Hunter offers an excellent comparison of Shakespeare’s technique in *MND* with that of Lyly in his court comedies (pp. 318–30).
44. The change suffered by the flower—from the whiteness of milk to the purple wound of love—juxtaposes maternal nurturance and erotic violence. To an Elizabethan audience, the metamorphosis may have suggested not only the blood of defloration but also the blood of menstruation—and, perhaps, the menarche, which manifests the sexual maturity of the female, the advent of womanhood and potential motherhood. According to popular Elizabethan gynecology, lactational amenorrhea is causally related to lactation, in that mother’s milk is a transubstantiation and refinement of menstrual blood: “Why have not women with childe the flowers? . . . Bicause that then the flowers turne into milke, and into the nourishment of the childe” (*Problemes of Aristotle*, sig. E5r).

An awareness that the commonest Elizabethan term for menses was “flowers” (see *Oxford English Dictionary*, s. v. “flower,” sense 2.b), adds a peculiar resonance to certain occurrences of flower imagery in Renaissance texts. This is especially the case in *MND*, in which flowers are conspicuously associated with female sexuality and with the moon. Consider Titania’s observation:

The moon, methinks, looks with a watery eye,  
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,  
Lamenting some enforced chastity. (3.1.101–03)

The answer to the question, “Why do the flowers receive their name Menstrua, of this word Mensis a moneth?” constitutes a gloss on Titania’s speech: “Bicause it is a space of time which doth measure the Moone. . . . Now the Moone hath dominion over moist things, and bicause the flowers are an humiditie, they take their denomination of the moneth, and are called monethly termes: for moist things do increase as the Moone doth increase, and decrease as she doth decrease” (*Problemes of Aristotle*, sig. E5r). In the quoted passage, Brooks follows previous editors in glossing “enforced” (line 193) as “violated by force” (Brooks, *Arden* ed. of *MND*, p. 62; cf. p. cxxix). However, the opposite reading—“enforced” as compulsory chastity—seems equally possible. (See *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “enforced,” sense 1: “That is subjected to force or constraint”; and sense 2: “That is forced upon or exacted from a person; that is produced by force.”) In one sense, then, the allusion is to sexual violation; in the other, it is to the injunction against sexual relations during menstruation (Leviticus 20:18; Ezekiel 18:6), which was commonly repeated by sixteenth and seventeenth century writers.

I raise the issue of menstrual symbolism here to suggest the degree to which an ambivalent discourse on female sexuality permeates Shakespeare's text. The imagery of the text insinuates that, whatever its provenance in horticultural lore, Oberon's maddening love-juice is a displacement of vaginal blood: a conflation of menstrual blood—which is the sign of women's generative power and of their pollution, their dangerousness to men—with the blood of defloration—which is the sign of men's mastery of women's bodies, of their generative powers and of their dangerousness. For a pertinent analogy to this dramatic process in tribal ritual, see J. S. La Fontaine, "Ritualization of Women's life-crises in Bugisu," in *The Interpretation of Ritual*, ed. J. S. La Fontaine (London, 1972), 159–86. See Patricia Crawford, "Attitudes to Menstruation in Seventeenth-Century England," *Past & Present*, 91 (May 1981), 47–73, for a useful introduction to this significant though neglected subject. Also see Barbara B. Harrell, "Lactation and Menstruation in Cultural Perspective," *American Anthropologist*, 83 (1981), 796–818, for an interesting analysis of the interplay between physiological and cultural factors in the "preindustrial reproductive cycle."

45. The text of the Sudeley entertainment was printed in *Speeches Delivered to Her Majestie this Last Progresse* (1592), rpt. in *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, ed. R. Warwick Bond, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1902), vol. 2, pp. 477–84. For a detailed analysis, see Montrose, "Eliza, Queene of Shepheardes," pp. 168–80.
46. Letters to Lady Mary Harington (1602) and Robert Markham (1606), rpt. in *The Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harington*, pp. 96, 123–25.
47. Reprinted in Nichols, *Progresses and Public Processions*, vol. 2, pp. 312–29. Further page references will be to volume 2 of this edition. The performance and its various contexts are discussed in Norman Council, "O Dea Certe: The Allegory of the Fortress of Perfect Beauty," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 39 (1976), 329–42; Louis Adrian Montrose, "Celebration and Insinuation: Sir Philip Sidney and the Motives of Elizabethan Courtship," *Renaissance Drama*, n. s. 8 (1977), 3–35; Richard C. McCoy, "'Pompes of a Pallace': The Place of *The Four Foster Children of Desire* in Sir Philip Sidney's Career," unpublished ms.
48. W. Waad to Sir Robert Cecil, 3 June 1600, printed in *Calendar of the Manuscripts of . . . The Marquis of Salisbury . . . preserved at Hatfield House*, 18 vols. (London: HMSO, 1883–1940), vol. 10, pp. 172–73.
49. For a subtle and far-ranging consideration of this issue, see Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. Elizabeth's self-fashionings are discussed on pp. 165–69, 230.
50. Here I can do no more than briefly suggest how this vital aspect of the play impinges upon my immediate subject. The significance of the social dynamic among the play's character-groups is appreciated and analyzed in Elliot Krieger, *A Marxist Study of Shakespeare's Comedies* (London, 1979), pp. 37–69.
51. See Theseus's remarks, 5.1.39–41, 90–105.
52. On the thematic significance of poetry and imagination, theatre and dramatic traditions, in *MND*, see Dent, "Imagination in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*"; Calderwood, *Shakespearean Metadrama*, pp. 120–48; David P. Young, *Something of Great Constancy* (New Haven, 1966); J. Dennis Huston, *Shakespeare's Comedies of Play* (New York, 1981), pp. 94–121. On the dialectic between Shakespeare's theatre and his society, see Louis Adrian Montrose, "The Purpose of Playing: Reflections on a Shakespearean Anthropology," *Helios*, n.s. 7:2 (Winter 1980), 51–74.
53. This essay has benefitted from the presentation of earlier and shorter versions to several audiences: The seminar on Marriage and the Family in Shakespeare at the 1980 Convention of The Modern Language Association (Houston, December 1980); The Clark Li-

brary Conference on Shakespeare's Renaissance (Los Angeles, November 1981); The Yale University Conference on Renaissance Woman/Renaissance Man (New Haven, March 1982); and colloquia at the Berkeley, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz campuses of The University of California (April-May 1982). Among the many who have offered encouragement and criticism of earlier versions, I am especially indebted to Janet Adelman, Paul Alpers, Harry Berger, Page du Bois, Stephen Greenblatt, Coppélia Kahn, Roxanne Klein, Steven Knapp, Richard McCoy, Maureen Quilligan, and Leonard Tennenhouse.



## Strange Things, Gross Terms, Curious Customs: The Rehearsal of Cultures in the Late Renaissance

### I

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1599, Thomas Platter of Basle visited the London apartments of Walter Cope—gentleman, adventurer, and member of Elizabeth's Society of Antiquaries—to view Cope's collection of curiosities gathered from around the world. No catalogue of the objects displayed in the room could presume to be complete. Platter himself records only a selection, but he does take an evident pleasure in compiling his list—a *plaisir de conter* akin to that which Jean Céard has found at work in contemporaneous accounts of nature's oddities and marvels, such as the anonymous *Histoire prodigieuses* published in 1598.<sup>1</sup> It is a pleasure in the recollection, literally, of such wonders as an African charm made of teeth, a felt cloak from Arabia, and shoes from many strange lands. An Indian stone axe, "like a thunderbolt." A stringed instrument with but one string. The twisted horn of a bull seal. An embalmed child, or *Mumia*. The bauble and bells of Henry VIII's fool. A unicorn's tail. Inscribed paper made of bark, and an artful Chinese box. A flying rhinoceros (unremarked), a remora (explicated at some length), and flies of a kind that "glow at night in Virginia instead of lights, since there is often no day there for over a month." There are the Queen of England's seal, a number of crowns made of claws, a Madonna made of Indian feathers, an Indian charm made of monkey teeth. A mirror, which "both reflects and multiplies objects." A sea-halcyon's nest. A sea mouse (*mus marinus*), reed pipes like those played by Pan, and a long narrow Indian canoe, with oars and sliding planks, hanging from the ceiling. They are all strange things, *frembden Sachen*.<sup>2</sup> The canoe lodged on the ceiling may have been a convention of sorts, judging from its promiscuity of appearance in other and better-known collections of the same variety (Fig. 1).

Cope's room is a *Kunst* or *Wunderkammer*, a wonder-cabinet: a form of collection peculiar to the late Renaissance, characterized primarily by its encyclopedic appetite for the marvellous or the strange and by an exceptionally brief historical career.<sup>3</sup> The first *Wunderkammer* was established in Vienna in 1550; for perhaps one hundred years such collections flourished, but by the middle of the seventeenth century they were rapidly vanishing. As early as *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), where Bacon calls for the "substantial and severe collection of the Heteroclitcs or Irregulars of nature," wonder-cabinets were derided as "frivolous impostures for

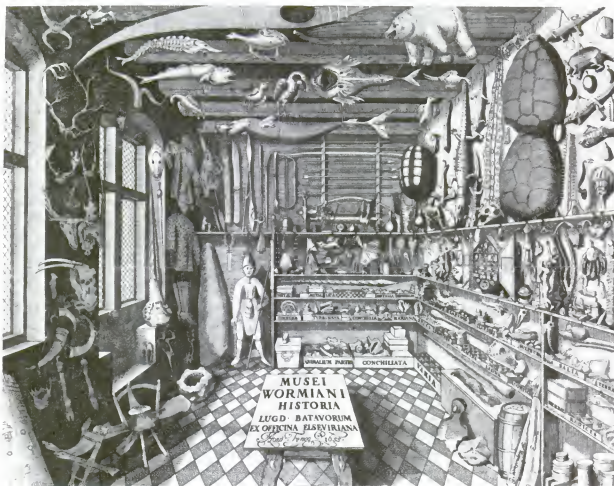


Fig. 1. From the *Museum Wormianum* (1655). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

pleasure and strangeness.”<sup>4</sup> The well-known Dresden collection proved to be a late survivor: founded in 1560, it remained intact until 1721, when it was broken up to form the separate exhibits—works of Nature, Art, Science—whose outlines can still be observed today. The dates serve to remind us that a wonder-cabinet is not a museum, not even a vague or half-formed gesture toward one. Its relation to later forms of collection is a discontinuous one, even when the objects displayed were themselves preserved and carried over, as in the case of Dresden. The museum as an institution rises from the ruins of such collections, like country houses built from the dismantled stonework of dissolved monasteries; it organizes the wonder-cabinet by breaking it down—that is to say, by analyzing it, regrouping the random and the strange into recognizable categories that are systematic, discrete, and exemplary. The museum represents an order and a categorical will to knowledge whose absence—or suspension—is precisely what is on display in a room such as Cope’s.

As Platter notes, these are strange things: a category that in fact withholds categorization, that neither specifies nor defines but rather sets the objects to which it refers

aside, grants them the freedom to remain as they are. Rhetorically, Platter's designation duplicates the effect which the wonder-cabinet itself produces in the objects thus displayed: it maintains them as "extraneous" in the Latin sense of the word, lodges them beyond the bounds of cultural hierarchies or definitions, at least for the time being. Regarded as such, anything could reside in a room like Cope's. No system determines the organization of the objects on display or separates one variety of the marvellous from another. We are surprised upon entering the room, but our surprise is occasioned not so much by the individual items we encounter, impressive though they are, as by the immediate, even immoderate familiarity they show for whatever joins them. These are things on holiday, randomly juxtaposed and displaced from any proper context; the room they inhabit acts as a liberty or sanctuary for ambiguous things, a kind of halfway-house for transitional objects, some new but not yet fully assimilated, others old and headed for cultural oblivion, but not yet forgotten or cast off. Taken together, they compose a heteroclit order without hierarchy or degree, an order in which kings mingle with clowns, or at least the props of their respective stations do; in which the outworn relics of Folly and the inconsequential charms of Alchemy (the unicorn's tail: neither its most potent nor even its most distinctive feature) hold court with icons of the crown, and with such genuine novelties as the Indian artifacts collected by Cope himself.

In the space of such a room, under the gaze of a spectator like Platter, the New World coincides with the Old and is even woven into the very fabric of European beliefs—as in the case of Cope's feathered Madonna, the handiwork of some forever unknown Arcimboldo of the Americas. How are we to interpret signs of such substantiality between the Old World and the New? Is this Madonna, for example, the record of a heathen brought into the Christian fold and eager to portray the image of his new faith—or is it rather a blasphemous parody of such conversions, an infernal representation in which the immaculate image finds itself appropriated by pagan craft? In the sixteenth century, there was cause for apprehension when Christian and pagan cultures mingled together, even in so token a fashion as this. "There is scarce anything," as Father Joseph de Acosta noted in his *Natural and Moral History of the Indies* (1598), "instituted by Jesus Christ our Savior in his Lawe and his Gospels, the which the Devil hath not counterfeited in some sort and carried to his Gentiles."<sup>5</sup> Such questions, however, do not occur to Thomas Platter, our remarkably incurious Swiss *curieux*. This is a room of wonder, not of inquiry. It requires and to a certain extent produces an audience that is at once passive and attentive, willing to suspend its critical faculties in order to view "strange things" as precisely that: as known but in a certain sense unaccountable, alien yet recognized as such, and so granted temporary license to remain without "authentic place" (as Ulysses says in his speech on Degree) in the cultural and ideological topography of the times.

What it means to be thus maintained, as something Other, is a question that will take us beyond the confines of the wonder-cabinet and into the field of a broader cultural dynamic, dramaturgical at heart and organized around the spectacle of

strange cultures during the period defined by the wonder-cabinet. In this context, Cope's display of strange things will serve as our introduction not to Renaissance collections, but to Renaissance collection: to the process rather than the product of what we might call the collective activity of the period. The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries collected and exhibited not only the trappings but also the customs, languages, and even the members of other cultures on a scale that was unprecedented. In forums ranging from wonder-cabinets to court masques and popular romances, from royal entries and traveller's narratives to the popular playhouses of Elizabethan London, the pleasures of the strange are invoked to solicit our attention as spectators, auditors, or readers, but the motives of what the period knew merely as its "curiosity" are far from clear. This is an essay into that curiosity, or more precisely, an inquiry into the attention which the period ostensibly devoted to the cultivation of wonder, but directed, oftentimes with paradoxical ends, toward its various cultural Others—toward the old and the new, the residual, emergent, and otherwise strange cultures that occupied an expanding horizon of concern for the dominant cultures of early modern Europe.

The wonder-cabinet and the suspension of cultural decorum and discrimination it exhibits provide us with the most literal but by no means the fullest representation of what the early modern period embraced as strange. We will be concerned here with a large and often lively cast of what the period perceived as alien, anomalous, dissimilar, barbarous, gross, or rude, and yet (if this is the proper conjunction of ambivalence) sought out for purposes of exhibition and display—maintained and produced, as something Other. What comes to reside in a wonder-cabinet are, in the most reified sense of the phrase, strange things: tokens of alien cultures, reduced to the status of sheer objects, stripped of cultural and human contexts in a way that makes them eminently capable of surviving the period that thus produced them. Although many *Wunderkammern* did indeed provide the raw materials for later collections and institutions, what we encounter in them is not the proleptic beginning of a civilizing process—the confused and somewhat frivolous origins of the museum—so much as the final stage of an historical dynamic specific to the period in question. In less objective forums, where other cultures were not—or at least, not yet—so radically reduced to their representative trappings, the attention directed toward strange ways and customs reveals an ambivalent and even paradoxical rhythm; in such forums, the maintenance and production of the strange takes on its most dramatic form, as a process of cultural production synonymous with cultural performance.

## II

Within and without the wonder-cabinet, the "spectacle of strangeness"<sup>6</sup> enjoyed a remarkable currency during the early modern period. Upon first encountering Caliban's indeterminate form, Trinculo observes that any strange beast could make a man—a comment which condenses in a phrase the period's investment—both

mercenary and imaginative—in the sheerly Other, and the increasing instability, even interchangeability, of cultural categories such as self and other, monster and man:

Were I in England now, as once I was, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver; there would this monster make a man; any strange beast there makes a man: when they will not give a doit to a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian.

(*The Tempest*, II.ii.27ff)

When cultural difference is less ambiguously affirmed, it can solicit our resources not merely as spectators or consumers but also as fellow travellers. Where the medieval explorer employed analogy and correspondence to make even the unprecedented familiar, a Renaissance ethnographer like Jean de Léry insists on an irreducible, inexpressible, but compelling residuum of difference in the lands and peoples he describes. After a full and evocative portrait of native Brazilians comes this disclaimer: “Their gestures and countenances are so different from ours, that I confess to my difficulty in representing them in words, or even in pictures. So, to enjoy the real pleasures of them, you will have to go and visit them in their own country.”<sup>7</sup>

Difference draws us to it; it promises pleasure and serves as an invitation to first hand experience, otherwise known as colonization. Where words and portraits failed, the thing itself was there for the taking. Trinculo’s hypothetical Indian was something of an historical commonplace in Elizabethan London. In 1577, for example, Martin Frobisher brought an Eskimo couple back from his second voyage to *Meta Incognita*, later known as Nova Scotia. The captives survived in England for over a year, a lengthy duration for such ethnic “tokens” of New World voyages. During that time, upheld by the Queen’s license and a skin-covered boat, the man could be seen (without charge, as far as we know) hunting the royal ducks and swans on the Thames; before her death the woman gave birth to a child who survived its parents briefly—residing at the Three Swans Tavern while alive, and the Church of St. Olave’s thereafter, apparently with the grace of a Christian burial.<sup>8</sup>

What the period could not contain within the traditional order of things, it licensed to remain on the margins of culture: a procedure which not only maintained literal aliens like Frobisher’s Eskimos, but also upheld figures of Elizabethan society such as the common players who, without a proper place of their own, were licensed to “make” any strange beast on stage, from Caliban to gentlemen and even kings. I will want to turn to the marginal status of the Elizabethan stage, to consider both its role in the representation of other cultures and, more importantly, the degree to which the popular stage occupied the position of a strange thing itself, fascinating but subject, as a consequence, to the same rituals of inclusion and exclusion as anything else that was deemed marginal, masterless, vagabond, or otherwise outlandish and out of place. For the moment, however, it will suffice to note that the line between Frobisher’s Eskimos and the theatrical creations of court and popular theatre was by no

means a firm one; when cultural productions of the period achieved their fullest dramaturgical form, the distinction between the alien and its representation, the real and the theatrical, virtually ceased to exist—at least for a brief and studiously foreclosed period of time.

The city of Rouen provides us with an example worth considering at some length. In 1550, a meadow bordering on the Seine and located on the outskirts of Rouen was planted with trees and shrubs, some natural, some artificial, all foreign to the locale and all combining to create the semblance of a Brazilian forest landscape. From the reports of those present, it was a recreation convincing to the knowing and well-travelled observer, both in what it revealed and in what it left concealed. The foliage was at certain points impenetrable to the eye, allowing the simulated forest to serve as habitat and refuge for the parrots, marmots, and apes that had been set at large within it. The *bons bourgeois* of the city had also constructed two authentically detailed Brazilian villages, the huts carved from solid tree-trunks at great labor but “in true native fashion.” The villages themselves were stocked with over fifty Tabbagerres and Toupinaboux Indians freshly imported for the occasion. Supplementing the genuine Brazilians were some two-hundred fifty Frenchmen appropriately costumed—“*sans aucunement couvrir la partie que nature commande*”—and drawn from the ranks of seamen, merchants, and adventurers who had been to Brazil and knew the manners, customs, and tongues of the tribes involved. “Elle sembloit veritable,” as an account published in 1551 testified, “et non simulée.”<sup>9</sup>

The occasion was Henri II's royal entry into Rouen: an event which can hardly explain the genesis of one of the most thorough performances of an alien culture staged by the Renaissance, but does at least illuminate the pragmatic function of Brazil in the ongoing dramaturgy of city and state. A delicate negotiation of power and prestige was at once necessitated and accomplished by a monarch's passage into an early modern city of any size. In keeping with the conventions of the Roman Triumph as transformed and elaborated by the Renaissance, it had become customary for a monarch and his procession to pause outside the city gates, on the threshold of the community, at that tenuous point where royal domain shaded into civic jurisdiction. Halting made the royal visitor more spectator than actor in the drama at hand and, prompted by his gaze, a mock battle or sciamachy would commence. Oftentimes the martial triumphs thus staged would celebrate the royal spectator's own military prowess and accomplishments. A mock siege was common. A castle erected on the margins of the city would be stormed and taken: rather than lay siege to gain entry, the monarch granted an entry was entertained by the comfortably displaced spectacle of a siege, a dramatic enactment that at once represented the potential for conflict manifested by a royal visit, and sublimated that potential, recasting it as a cultural performance to be enjoyed by city and crown alike. When Queen Isabella of Bavaria entered Paris in 1389, it was only after watching Saladin and his Saracens defend a castle eventually taken by Richard Coeur de Lion; at Rome in 1492, in commemora-

tion of the victory at Granada, Spanish troops stormed a wooden castle occupied by citizens in Moors' clothing.<sup>10</sup>

Henri did not witness a siege, but he did view what the Imperial Ambassador described as "a sham combat illustrating the manner of fighting in Brazil."<sup>11</sup> Before the battle began, however, the royal party lingered for some time, delighted with the convincing performance of natives real and counterfeit as they went about their daily rounds. Such a delay marked a temporary suspension in the momentum of the King's entry—lingering on the threshold not only of the city, but also of the sciamachy which customarily manifested that threshold—but the breach in ceremonial decorum was quite understandable. The "Figures des Brazilians" (Fig. 2) that accompanies the official account of the entry shows men hunting monkeys with arrows and spears, or scaling trees to gather the fruit that was either lashed in place or growing there. A group of men and women dance in a clearing, their hands joined in a circle reminiscent of European May-games. Couples stroll arm in arm through the foliage; toward the right-hand margin of the scene, a man and a woman strike a pose that recalls period illustrations of Genesis. Yet the tableau is polymorphous, overdetermined in the sense that it represents more than a single scene should be able to contain. Along with its version of Edenic pastoral it reveals a land of unbiblical license and enterprise. Some of the couples are partially obscured in the underbrush, taking advantage of the cover to indulge in relatively unabashed foreplay; men are hewing trees, then carrying them to the river to build primitive barks. The soft primitivism of biblical tradition coexists with a harder interpretation of pagan cultures, akin to the portraits of barbaric life composed by Piero di Cosimo.<sup>12</sup>

What we have is a detailed *mise en scène* of Brazilian culture, recreating even the moment of the natives' capture—on the Seine, a French merchant ship is under sail, gradually approaching the bank where a group of naked and unknowing figures awaits its arrival<sup>13</sup>—and the projection of European libido and myth onto that scene. The New World is both recreated in the suburbs of the Old and made over into an alternate version of itself, strange but capable of imagination. Dominating the field of the spectacle, a man and woman occupy a hammock stretched prominently between two trees. The two are naked like those below them, but even so they are invested with a regal bearing; the man holds a sceptre, and both figures wear crowns that contrast sharply with the leaves and fronds worn as headgear by their savage subjects. Similarly crowned but fully cloaked in the robes of state, watching his heathen surrogate from the vantage point of a scaffold placed at the edge of the meadow, Henri must have been especially pleased to find a version of himself and his Queen, Catharine de Medici, thus occupying the scene he beheld. A major theme of the day would be revealed in the final emblematic display of the entry, in the heart of the city, where Henri's father would be praised "for having restored letters and saved [Rouen] from barbarism,"<sup>14</sup> and Henri himself would be admonished to follow in his father's footsteps. It was a duty already foreshadowed, its barbaric metaphor cast into more literal



Fig. 2. From *C'est la Deduction...* (Rouen, 1551). By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

terms, in these figures of primitive patriarchy, raised above the savage scene they commanded, over which they ruled.

At some point, fighting broke out between the two tribes. One decimated the ranks of the other, then burned its village to the ground. On the following day victor and vanquished would trade roles, for the entire Triumph was repeated in an encore performance for Catharine's own entry, during which the second village, faithfully and elaborately fashioned so as to be "*le certain simulacre de la verité*," was also set ablaze and reduced to ash.<sup>15</sup> The recreation of Brazil had been surprisingly detailed and complete, and its consummation followed suit. It was the age of conspicuous expenditure and ostentatious display; what was displayed in public ceremony was often, in one sense or another, used up in the process, consummation being in fact the point: what you had was most clearly manifested by how much you could afford to



expend in lavish and costly celebration.<sup>16</sup> But the consumption of Brazil can hardly be explained by such generalities of early modern culture. What was most conspicuously expended in this instance was neither money, time, nor other indigenous resources, but an alien culture itself, at least in terms of theatrical representation. It is difficult to say which is more awesome: the painstaking expense of spirit and wealth that went into such a carefully reconstructed and authenticated verisimilitude, or the thoroughness with which it was all effaced, even though full effacement required a full-scale repetition of the entire entry.

Representation is always a form of repetition, but in the two-day course of events at Rouen both representation and re-presentation, imitation and repeated performance, conspired to achieve a paradoxical end: not the affirmation of what was thus represented and repeated, but its erasure or negation. The ethnographic attention and knowledge displayed at Rouen was genuine, amazingly thorough, and richly detailed; the object, however, was not to understand Brazilian culture but to perform it, in a paradoxically self-consuming fashion. Knowledge of another culture in such an instance is directed toward ritual rather than ethnological ends, and the rite involved is one ultimately organized around the elimination of its own pretext: the spectacle of the Other that is thus celebrated and observed, in passing. To speak of Renaissance curiosity or fascination with other cultures hardly begins to address what is odd in such an anthropology, geared not toward the interpretation of strange cultures but toward their consummate performance.<sup>17</sup> What we glimpse in the field outside Rouen is not a version of the modern discipline of anthropology, but something preliminary to it; not the interpretation, but what I would call the *rehearsal* of cultures.

### III

A rehearsal is period of free-play during which alternatives can be staged, unfamiliar roles tried out, the range of one's power to convince or persuade explored with some license; it is a period of performance, but one in which customary demands of decorum are suspended, along with expectations of final or perfected form.

For us, as a phenomenon most immediately associated with the stage, a rehearsal is also fully distinct from actual performance, but such a distinction is a modern one. In Elizabethan England, for example, rehearsal referred as easily, and as often, to performance or recital—*recitare* is commonly translated as “rehearse”—as it did to some practice session preparatory to public performance. For Shakespeare and his contemporaries, to recite, rehearse, or perform were synonymous terms, fully interchangeable and appositely applied to almost any dramatic situation. The one exception, where a rehearsal was a necessary prerequisite to public performance, is an important one for our purposes, for it takes us outside a strictly theatrical arena and introduces us to a form of rehearsal dictated by jurisprudential rather than artistic concerns. A rehearsal was fully distinct from public performance when it took place at

the Office of Revels, "where our Court playes have become in late daies," as John Heywood wrote in his *Apology for Actors*, "yearly rehersed, perfected, and corrected before they come to the publike view."<sup>18</sup>

Such a rehearsal, performed under the gaze of jurisprudence for purposes of cultural review, is only coincidentally related to the history of the stage. Plays came to be rehearsed before the Master of Revels not because they were plays, that is to say, but because they attained a prominence that made them potentially dangerous (and hence, potentially useful) to reigning cultural hierarchies. Other matters, nondramatic in nature, were likewise rehearsed before the powers that be. When John Dee, accused of conjuration and rumored to be a Papist, published an account of his life and studies, he named his treatise *The Compendious Rehearsal*:<sup>19</sup> it was to be read by Elizabeth and the public at large, to be judged and, along with its author, either censured or given a clear imprimatur. The genealogy of such rehearsals lies not with the stage but with the larger dramaturgy of power and its confrontations with the forbidden or the taboo, with all that stood outside the strict confines of authority, whether embodied in magical science, plays, or alien cultures themselves. In England, what appears to be the earliest example of cultural rehearsal in this sense comes from the reign of Edward I, whose colonization of Wales in the thirteenth century would provide a model and precedent for the foreign and subcultural excursions of sixteenth-century England. Edward first conquered Wales, then "rehearsed" Welsh culture as a necessary prologomenon to full colonization. "We have caused to be rehearsed [*recitari*] before Us and the Nobles of our Realm," he declares in the *Statuta Wallia* (1284), "the laws and customs of these parts hitherto in use: which being diligently heard and fully Understood, We have, by the Advise of aforesaid Nobles, abolished certain of them, some of them We have allowed, and some of them We have corrected."<sup>20</sup>

The field cleared by the conflagration of Brazil was, of course, French to begin with; Henri occupied the position not of a judge or censor but of an appreciative and admiring spectator. In describing the Brazilian interlude at Rouen as the rehearsal of a strange culture, I mean to cast it neither as a practice session nor as the mere performance of something alien; neither do I mean to reduce it to the merely colonial, although we are obviously involved with the symbolic, socially "misrecognized" armature of the colonial enterprise of the period. We are concerned here with a cultural practice that allows, invites, and even demands a full and potentially self-consuming review of unfamiliar things. Whatever the ultimate end of such a rehearsal, whether consummation, colonization, or a less clearly defined negotiation between a dominant culture and its Others, the attention directed toward Brazilian ways at Rouen was by no means reserved for New World cultures. "The 'ethnicks' of the Americas," notes J. R. Hale, "had a special, though delayed, power to jolt the Europeans into taking fresh stock of themselves."<sup>21</sup> Of themselves or, more accurately, of those "ethnicks" they could call their own. In the sixteenth century, a commonly drawn analogy

articulated a certain equivalence between inquiries into newly discovered cultures of the Western hemisphere and the increasingly important subcultures of the Old World. "We have Indians at home," one Englishman observed, "Indians in Cornwall, Indians in Wales, Indians in Ireland."<sup>22</sup> Europe had begun to mind its own, to take note of its rural and suburban populations, to review their customs and rituals, their ways of speech and community. "Their languages, names, surnames, allusions, anagrams, armories, monies, poesies, epitaphes," to quote from the title of Camden's *Remaines concerning Britaine* (1614).

The late sixteenth century stands as an odd interregnum in history. The impressive but ineffectual body of Elizabethan poor laws began, at this time, to compose its growing list of peddlers, wandering scholars, unlicensed players, sturdy beggars, and the like, all brought together as "vagabonds," assembled, like the marvels of a wonder-cabinet, to await the disposition of a later age—in this instance, to wait nearly one hundred years before the early modern state articulated itself well enough to create a bureaucracy capable of implementing the Vagabond Acts. Madness was confined and maintained during the period, but not excluded from public view or shut away from the light—of day or of Reason—as it would be during the Enlightenment. Rather, Folly in all its variety was gathered together so that it could be fully licensed for display, made more accessible and given greater currency than had ever been the case in the Middle Ages, when madness was free (or subject) to wander. Throughout Europe, writes Michel Foucault, "a new and lively pleasure is taken in the old confraternities of madmen, in their festivals, their gatherings, their speeches."<sup>23</sup> In England, Bedlam Hospital was operated as a concession under its Tudor administration, a playhouse of Folly that served as much to showcase madness and oversee its performance as to confine or control it.

The theatrical metaphor is hardly inappropriate, if it can be called a metaphor at all. We find the same audience, the same suspension of cultural decorum and blurring of xenophilia and phobia, in attendance at madhouses, royal entries, and wonder-cabinets as we find at the popular playhouses of Elizabethan London. When we do turn to the popular stage, however, its place in this larger cultural review proves to be a fully ambivalent one. According to Muriel Bradbrook, a great many "social and customary forms might have passed relatively unobserved" if the popular stage had not recorded and transformed them into drama, if Marlowe and Shakespeare had not cultivated a language and a stagecraft capable of sustaining such a *bricolage* of other cultures—New World, European, and most importantly, popular. "Country pastimes too might have vanished . . . leaving no signs other than those to be disinterred by the social historian."<sup>24</sup> While a great deal of what we know about country ways and pastimes does indeed come from the stage, rural and folk customs were not merely vanishing, however. Far from being neglected in Elizabethan England, they were being accorded an unprecedented degree of attention. In his archaeological quest for pastime, the modern social historian turns to a quite full archive, made up of sermons

such as Lattimer's attack on May-games, Puritan tracts detailed in the objects of their revulsion, city ordinances and Statutes of the Realm protecting the Sabbath, exiling or branding rogues, vagabonds, and other masterless men, banning and regulating country pastimes, festivities, and of course, plays themselves. Documents of criticism, as E. K. Chambers called them, and documents of control.

Such documents were designed to be read by as large an audience as possible; some even became works of popular literature in their own right, read with as much delight as Hakluyt's *Voyages* or Peter Martyr's *Decades*. It is customarily regarded as one of the ironies of history that works such as Phillip Stubbes' *Anatomie of Abuses* (1583) provide us with our fullest account of the country, alien, heathen, or otherwise strange ways they would see repressed, but must first review or rehearse at some length. Indeed, repression may be too crude a mechanism to describe the paradoxical process involved. Stubbes, for example, charges that stage plays "maintaine bawdrie, insinuat folery, and revive the remembrance of hethen idolytrie," but is himself forced or otherwise compelled to stoke the popular memory with detailed descriptions of the "babblerie" and pastimes he would see abolished:

Against May, *Whitsunday* or other time, all the yung men and maides, olde men and wiues, run gadding ouer night to woods, groves, hills, & mountains, where they spend all night in pleasant pastimes; & in the morning they return, bringing with them birch & branches of trees, to deck their assemblies withall. And not meruaile, for there is a great Lord present amongst them, as superintendent and Lord ouer their pastimes and sportes, namely, Sathan, prince of hel. But the cheifest iewel they bring from thence is their May-pole, which they bring home with great veneration, as thus. They haue twentie or fortie yoke of Oxen, euery Oxe hauing a sweet nose-gay of flouers placed on the tip of his hornes; and these Oxen drawe home this May-pole (this stinking Ydol, rather) which is couered all ouer with floures and hearbes, bound round about with strings from the top to the bottome, and sometime painted with variable colors, with great deuotion. And thus beeing reared vp with handkercheefs and flags houering on the top, they straw the ground rounde about, binde green boughes about it, set vp sommer haules, bowers, and arbors hard by it; And then fall they to daunce about it, like as the heathen people did at the dedication of the Idols, wherof this is a perfect pattern, or rather the thing it self. I haue heard it credibly reported (and that *viua voce*) by men of great grauitie and reputation, that of fortie, threescore, or a hundred maides going to the wood ouer night, there haue scaresly the third part of them returned home againe undefiled.<sup>25</sup>

Stubbes recreates the May festival for us and draws us into it with his conspiratorial air (*viua voce*). To a degree, the need for such detail stems from the audience for which Stubbes composed his *Anatomie*. The work poses as a description of a foreign land and its customs, a *Discoverie*, as Stubbes calls it, of "a very famous Ilande called Ailgna." Thomas Platter's *Travels* is of the genre imitated; the country visited is England, but Stubbes' fiction of travelling to a distant land was, as C. L. Barber writes, "not altogether inappropriate, for Merry England was becoming foreign to the pious tradesman's London for which Stubbes was the spokesman."<sup>26</sup>

But it is not merely cultural alienation or distance that accounts for Stubbes' apparent fondness for detail. When the Church sought to put down pagan customs, it

did so with circumspection, making sure the customs it proscribed could not be recreated from the description it gave. Jean-Baptiste Thiers described magic rituals in his *Traité des superstitions qui regardent les sacramens*, but he suppressed certain signs and words, marking the deletions with ellipses, in order to insure that his readers would not be able to try out the spells he denounced.<sup>27</sup> In Stubbes we encounter no analogue to such caution. In place of a more elliptical depiction we find, if not a perfect, then a fully fleshed portrait of “the thing itself.” We could recreate the May-games, thanks to Stubbes, with as much verisimilitude as we encountered in the recreation of Brazil. Remembrance is at any rate renewed by such a rehearsal of culture; Stubbes’s treatise is an exercise in cultural mnemonics, an effort to displace or recreate cultural memory. The question, for past times and for us, is what it means to be attended to in such fashion.

An answer is suggested by Sir Thomas Browne. “Knowledge is made by oblivion,” Browne writes in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, “and to purchase a clear and warrantable body of Truth, we must forget and part with much we know.”<sup>28</sup> Browne’s work, otherwise known as *Enquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors* (1649), is a collection of proverbial and country wisdom compiled for a learned audience, many of whom had never heard the folk sayings he would have them forget. Forgetting becomes a more arduous task when its first stage is the review or remembrance, even the initial learning, of what is to be consigned to oblivion. The paradox requires Browne to compose “a long and serious *Adviso*, proposing not only a large and copious List, but from experience and reason attempting their decisions [from *decidere*, to cut off].” Although collections of proverbs existed throughout the medieval period, Browne’s work belongs to a new genre, as characteristic of its age as wonder-cabinets were. Laurent Joubert’s *Erreurs populaires* (1578) is the earliest of such anthologies: forays by the learned into the new-found land of popular culture, in which “vulgar” thought and customs were recorded and collected as Error. Such collections were made for the sake of posterity, but it was a posterity that would only be achieved if the errant proverbs and pastimes thus gathered together were not included in it. As Natalie Davis has shown, the aspirations of French and English collectors of proverbs were at best contradictory. On the one hand, the recording of popular thought marked an effort to enrich the vernacular by absorbing folk and country sayings into the learned discourse of the mother tongue; on the other, there was an effort to purify the vernacular, to control and correct popular thought—also by collecting it.<sup>29</sup>

Although the aims seem mutually exclusive, they were often announced by one and the same collector; purification could only come after all that would ultimately be banished from the language was first worked through, in full. The rhythm is one of exhibition, followed by exclusion or effacement; a rehearsal of popular culture, with a self-consuming end in mind. The process of observation and review does not merely precede the subsequent revision, but is more intimately related to it. Review is revision, where a rehearsal of culture is involved. As with the Brazilian interlude at Rouen, the exhibition of what is to be effaced, repressed, or subjected to new and more

rigorous mechanisms of control can be a surprisingly full one. It is a form of exhibition, in fact, that recalls one of the more archaic uses of the word. Exhibition once referred to the unveiling of a sacrificial offering—to the exposure of a victim, placed on public view for a time preliminary to the final rites that would, after a full and even indulgent display, remove the victim from that view. Early modern collection is not merely an idle assembly of strange and outlandish things. Collection was a ritual process, a rehearsal of cultures that comes into clearest view on the Elizabethan stage.

The juxtaposition of Elizabethan playhouse and the more explicit collective activity of the period takes us back to Thomas Platter. Before visiting Cope's apartments, Platter crossed the Thames to sample the entertainments of Bankside: a bull-ring, a bear-baiting and a cockfight, the taverns of Southwark (where women drinking freely alongside their husbands or lovers proved as astonishing a sight as any other spectacle of the day), and one of the first performances in the recently constructed Globe—a version of *Julius Caesar*, almost certainly Shakespeare's. The phenomenon of the Elizabethan play was as striking and unfamiliar to Platter as Cope's collection is to us; unfamiliar enough, at any rate, to require some explanation, as *Wunderkammern* did not. "With these and many more amusements the English pass their time, learning from the plays what is happening in other lands; indeed, men and women visit such places without scruple, since the English do not travel much, but prefer to learn of strange things [*fremde* (sic) *Sachen*] and take their pleasures at home."<sup>30</sup>

Platter surveys and samples London's Liberties quite thoroughly, failing only to note what a foreign visitor could not know: that the stage he visits and finds to be a dynamic and dramatic exhibition of "strange things" was itself a recent cultural phenomenon, fully contemporaneous with wonder-cabinets and the like. As Platter's brief observation suggests, the popular stage did indeed serve as a glass in which Elizabethan culture could find the objects of its fascination represented and reflected; yet that stage was also, like Cope's feathered Madonna, a strange thing in and of itself. Shakespeare's contemporaries did not take their pleasures quite at home. The journey across the Thames, from the city to the Liberties, was a short but considerable one: a passage into a domain of cultural license as diverse as any wonder-cabinet, a field of ambivalent cultures and marginal pastimes lodged, like Rouen's Brazil, on the margins of order and community. At once native and strange, the popular stage also stood enough outside the dominant culture of its time to be capable of some reflection on what it meant to be thus maintained, as something Other—to be upheld for a while, as Hal says early in *1 Henry IV*, when he moves to the edge of the stage and lingers there for a moment, on the verge of an extraordinary career collecting and rehearsing strange ways, tongues, and of course, companions.

#### IV

Thomas Platter speaks only of the "pleasure" of learning strange things after his encounter with an Elizabethan play; few of Shakespeare's contemporaries

(Elizabethan or modern) have more to tell us. Warwick in *2 Henry IV* is a significant exception.<sup>31</sup> It is an unfamiliar process of education, a theory of learning unformulated in any contemporaneous text I know, that Warwick articulates when he endeavors, late in both the play and the history of the King's doubts, to convince Henry IV that his prodigal son will soon sequester himself from open haunts and popularity, cease to be the royal familiar of Eastcheap's taverns and brothels, and most notoriously, will cut short his tutelage with that immensity known as Falstaff:

The Prince but studies his companions  
 Like a strange tongue, wherein, to gain the language,  
 'Tis needful that the most immodest word  
 Be look'd upon and learnt; which once attain'd  
 Your Highness knows, comes to no further use  
 But to be known and hated. So, like gross terms,  
 The prince will, in the perfectness of time,  
 Cast off his followers . . .

(*2HIV*, IV.iv.68–75)

By this point in the Lancastrian tetralogy, we are strangers neither to the situation nor the import of Warwick's words. The cycle of doubt and reassurance has been repeated more than once since Henry first linked riot and dishonor to the name of his young Harry (I.i.80–90); Hal himself announces his reasons for misrule at his first opportunity, as if to allay our own doubts about his character, and Warwick's tone ("your Highness knows . . .") lends a familiar air to the scene. Like the Prince himself, Warwick speaks to what is intentional in Hal's prodigal career. Hal has planned to attain propriety and respectability through a sort of *via negativa*, a self-conscious rite of passage that will carry him from the stews of Eastcheap to the halls of Westminster, from ritual defilement to purification in the public eye. "He is getting to know the seamy side of life," as Jonas Barish paraphrases the passage, "acquainting himself with vices *so as* to hate and shun them, as men learn foul words in foreign tongues *in order* to purify their vocabularies."<sup>32</sup>

The paraphrase is an accurate one, perhaps too much so. It repeats not only Warwick's meaning but his tone as well. But is the language lesson Warwick describes such a commonplace affair? It would be one thing to say that we inevitably acquire immodest words and gross terms in the process of learning a strange tongue, that only when we attain some mastery of the language are we in a position to recognize what is gross as gross, and eliminate it from our discourse. It is quite another thing to say, as Warwick does, that gross or obscene words are learned *because* they offer material for future reformations, that they are acquired *in order that* we may later purify our vocabularies by casting them off, after a period of what Barish calls an "immersion in an alien element." Such a language lesson, described in terms proper to ritual exclusion and sacrifice, would have been no more familiar to its original audience than it is to us. It would, however, have registered in a more

immediate and highly charged context, considering the ambivalence attached to “strange tongues,” foreign or domestic, during the sixteenth century. Warwick’s comment comes at a time when learned culture was in the midst of an extraordinary and awesome linguistic shift, a shift from Latin to the competing dialects, idioms, and grammars we generalize into something singular enough to be called *the vernacular*.

Earlier in the century, in 1535, Henry VIII had addressed the problem of linguistic variety with characteristic bluntness when he outlawed Welsh, finding that “great Discord Variance Debate Division Murmur and Seditiō” had arisen, due to the fact that the Welsh “have and do daily use a Speech nothing like, nor consonant to the natural Mother Tongue within this Realm” (27 *Henry 8*, c. 26).<sup>33</sup> But as that mother tongue came into more universal use, its “naturalness” proved the sign of its inadequacy and lack of eloquence rather than the mark of its pure self-sufficiency. Even in the earlier half of the century, when compared to other European vernaculars, English was found wanting. It was judged to be “rude, base, unpleasant, grosse, and barbarouse.”<sup>34</sup> The mother tongue was in need not of protection but of supplementation from other languages; English itself began to study strange tongues. Richard Foster Jones has traced in detail the long debate that the vernacular carried on with and about itself throughout the sixteenth century,<sup>35</sup> gradually coming to justify the importation of “straunge termes” and foreign phrases, licensing, against all precedent, a principle of linguistic change that Richard Mulcaster exuberantly proclaimed to be the “*prerogative*, and *libertie*” of all languages.<sup>36</sup>

One of the results was Elizabethan English, a language “which combined both a vast range of reference—social and natural—with a unique freedom of *epiphora*, a freedom, that is, to transpose, a liberty of transference and application.”<sup>37</sup> The vernacular was not a fixed linguistic system so much as a linguistic crossroads, a field where many languages—foreign tongues, local dialects, Latin and Greek—intersected; as the vernacular transposed and assimilated words and phrases from other languages, it came more and more to be a “gallimaufrey, or hodgepodge of al other speeches.”<sup>38</sup> The medieval world had been structured around a dual language hierarchy: on the one hand, a stable and monolithic Latin for learned and official society, and on the other, the metamorphic, plural, and largely oral vernacular, a plethora of local dialects, idioms, and jargons that was the province of popular culture. As that hierarchy broke down, however, the linguistic worlds that had formerly been held apart, as distinct and separate entities, came into increasing contact with one another. The European vernaculars came to inhabit the boundaries of other languages, to import values, concepts, and ideologies from strange tongues both foreign and domestic. The literary and linguistic vitality of the Renaissance was born in the space of such contact and assimilation, where a certain capacity for linguistic self-estrangement was possible—a capacity, as Mikhail Bakhtin says of Rabelais’ linguistic world, to stand outside one’s own mother tongue, to cultivate it as one would the tongue of another:



The primitive and naive coexistence of languages and dialects had come to an end; the new consciousness was born not in a perfected and fixed linguistic system but at the intersection of many languages and the point of their most intense interorientation and struggle. Languages are philosophies—not abstract but concrete, social philosophies, penetrated by a system of values inseparable from living practice and class struggle . . . . The language of the sixteenth century, and especially the language of Rabelais, are sometimes described as naive even today. In reality the history of European literature presents no language less naive. Rabelais' exceptional frankness and ease are anything but that. The literary and linguistic consciousness of his time was aware of its media not only from the inside but also from the outside, in the light of other languages.<sup>39</sup>

When we are dealing with learned society, we must remember that the vernacular in and of itself was a strange tongue. Montaigne learned Latin before French, and despite neglecting the former for nearly forty years—avoiding Latin altogether in speech and only rarely employing it for writing—it remained his “naturall” tongue, surfacing immediately in times of crisis or anxiety. “In some extreame emotions and sudden passions,” he reports, “. . . I have ever, even from my very heart uttered my first words in Latine: Nature rushing and by force expressing itself, against so long a custom.”<sup>40</sup> When the translators of the 1611 Bible compared their work with other translations “both in our owne, and *other* forreigne languages,” they identified, with their eloquent and inclusive “other,” a state of linguistic alienation characteristic of the Renaissance. It was a period when the shift to the vernacular meant speaking and writing daily in a language regarded as one's own mother tongue and as a barbarous language. This is most emphatically the case where English was concerned. English was neither Greek, Hebrew, nor Latin, but rather “the rudest cuntry, and most barbarous mother language.”<sup>41</sup> The voice of the Other, of the *barbaros*, sounded in the throat whenever the mother tongue was spoken; one's own tongue was strange yet familiar; a foreigner within, a quite literal internal *émigré*.

English manifested an extreme inadequacy and barbarity for sixteenth-century Englishmen; no other European vernacular met with such ambivalence from its native speakers. According to Richard Carew, however, the poverty and strangeness of the English language were not to its disadvantage. Rather, they were the sign of its potential, a sign, in fact, of power. Growing up with a mother tongue that was itself barbarous and strange, to be likened to “other forreigne languages,” made linguistic chameleons of the English, developing in them a capacity to adopt and assimilate foreign cultures as if they were their own. It is such a capacity which Carew praises as “The Excellencie of the English Tongue”:

. . . a Stranger, though never so long conversant among us, carrieth evermore a Watchword upon his tongue, to descry him by; but turn an *Englishman* at any time of his Age into what Country soever, allowing him due respite, and you shall see him profit so well, that the imitation of his Utterance will in nothing differ from the Pattern of that native language, the want of which towardness cost the *Ephraimites* their skins.<sup>42</sup>

Carew also praises English for the forcefulness of its metaphors (“our speech doth not consist only of words, but in a sort even of deeds”) and for the many puns and equivocations open to it in its expansiveness. What he calls the “towardness” of the language—a resource native to Englishmen, wanting in the Ephraimites—is a kind of linguistic sympathy, a capacity for imitation that allows the Self and the Other to speak the same tongue, indistinguishably. It is an imaginative sympathy that allows alien voices and ideologies not merely to be recorded or studied, but entered into and enacted quite fully: a theatrical capacity, then, with which boundaries between nations, tongues, and classes can be crossed with liberty.

It is just such a quality of “towardness” that Shakespeare’s Prince Hal relies upon and displays so brilliantly in his antithetical rise to power. His time in the taverns of Eastcheap is a literal as well as a figurative language lesson; although the tenor of Warwick’s simile concerns Hal’s companions, studied like a strange tongue, the comparison is also something of a two-handed engine. In the context of *Henry IV* it is fully reversible, since the language lesson deployed as an analogy also acts as a literal and quite apposite description of Hal’s marginal pursuits. Shakespeare’s Prince studies strange tongues (English in its various dialects and idioms) as he learns his companions—that is, in the same fashion and at the same time:

Sirrah, I am sworn brother to a leash of drawers, and can call them all by their christen names, as Tòm, Dick, and Francis . . . They call drinking deep “dyeing scarlet,” and when you breathe in your watering they cry “Hem!” and bid you “Play it off!” To conclude, I am so good a proficient in one quarter of an hour that I can drink with any tinker in his own language during my life.

(*1HIV*, II.iv.6ff)

In Elizabethan legend, Henry V first acquired the English language during his prodigal youth in the inns and alehouses of London. He went on, once he assumed the throne, to make the King’s English—a phrase that originates with the reign of Henry V—the official language of the Court.<sup>43</sup> Shakespeare’s Hal likewise descends “from a prince to a prentice” (*2HIV*, II.ii.174), but with a difference. Shakespeare does not repeat history but instead displaces it into his own present. The English Hal acquires when he sounds the base string of humility is not Chaucer’s but Shakespeare’s English; he does not learn the mother tongue for the first time, but he does immerse himself in the native yet alien element of country dialects and “rude” words with which Shakespeare’s dramatic language abounds—in which the two parts of *Henry IV* are most significantly immersed.

Learning tinker’s tongues, Hal also acquires their tastes, becoming “so loosely studied as to remember so weak a composition” (*1HIV*, II.ii.7) as small beer, and to desire it with an unprincely appetite.<sup>44</sup> It is an appetite that ranges from the tongues of the taverns to the items on Falstaff’s sack-heavy shopping list—“What there is else keep close, we’ll read it at more advantage” (*1HIV*, II.iv.534)—and the easily mas-

tered comings and goings of an apprentice like Francis;<sup>45</sup> an appetite for the unfamiliar details of popular culture, for the manners and morals, the ways of speech and material conditions of life on the margins of society, among the masterless men, bawds, bankrupts, wayward apprentices, and refugees from country reforms whom Falstaff sums up as the “tattered prodigals” of the land. From the vantage point of Henry IV, of course, the Prince’s marginal pastimes are merely “vile participation” in a cultural domain removed from the province of proper authority or efficacious rule. Such participation in the life of the taverns removes the Prince from his place in the hierarchy of state and makes him “almost an alien to the hearts/ Of all the court” (*1HIV*, III.ii.34). According to Henry, the Prince is in his errancy: a prodigal son.

It is a point of view which Shakespeare’s audiences expected to occupy themselves when they ventured beyond the confines of sixteenth-century London to see the first part of *Henry IV*. They came to see a familiar and well-known story. As Richard Helgerson has shown, the parable of the prodigal son was deeply engrained in the cultural imagination of Elizabethan England; its rhythm of exorbitance and recovery, of wayward youth succeeded by mature responsibility, held such great appeal for Elizabethans that men whose adolescence was relatively staid and well-mannered often depicted their youth as a time of license and riot, projecting back upon the past the contours of a prodigality never experienced yet nonetheless remembered and recounted as real.<sup>46</sup> The two versions of prodigality known to the full spectrum of Elizabethan society were the Biblical parable itself and the much-mythologized story of Henry V’s wild adolescence. Hal’s initial appearance on stage—bantering with Falstaff and Poins, baffling the former with unsavory similes and plotting Gadshill with the latter—would have met with immediate and self-gratified recognition from the audience. Immediate, yet pointedly short-lived:

I know you all, and will awhile uphold  
The unyoked humour of your idleness.  
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,  
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds  
To smother up his beauty from the world,  
That, when he please again to be himself,  
Being wanted he may be more wonder’d at  
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists  
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.  
If all the year were playing holidays,  
To sport would be as tedious as to work;  
But when they seldom come, they wish’d-for come,  
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.  
So, when this loose behaviour I throw off,  
And pay the debt I never promised,  
By how much better than my word I am,  
By so much shall I falsify men’s hopes . . .

(*1HIV*, I.ii.190)

Hal alienates himself from the audience in an unexpected sense—falsifying *their* hopes—when he steps aside from his prodigal career to discourse on its strategic potential. Moving forward to deliver his opening soliloquy, he moves beyond the confines of audience expectation to reveal a strange and unfamiliar visage: not a prodigal youth given over to vile participation but a Prince who plays at prodigality, and means to translate his rather full performance into the profession of power.

Henry continues to see only a prodigal son, but for the audience Hal's participation in the taverns represents a prodigality of a different order—the sign not of errant youth but of power, making a far from traditional passage through the margins and subcultures of its domain. As a result of that passage, the taverns of Eastcheap are difficult to maneuver without a copy of Tilley's *Proverbs* as a guide-book: they comprise a kind of wonder-cabinet themselves, composed not of strange artifacts but of country proverbs, idiomatic expressions drawn from local dialects, and phrases of popular jargon, many of which would have gone unrecorded if they had not appeared in these plays, the richest in Shakespeare's corpus for popular speech. Some expressions remain as inaccessible to us as the Welsh we assume was spoken by Glendower and Lady Percy in *1 Henry IV* (III.i.185ff), and may have been equally inaccessible to a large part of Shakespeare's audience.<sup>47</sup> Others are relatively clear:

By the mass, here will be old utis; it will be an  
excellent strategem.

(2HIV, II.iv.19)

The Drawer's exclamation to Francis anticipates the Prince and Poins dressed in jerkins and leather aprons, playing prentices to Falstaff's disadvantage. In the dialect of Worcester, "utis" meant noise, confusion, or din; yet "utas" is also a corruption of octave, the traditional term for the eighth and final day of a festival, and generally referred to any period of festivity or customary celebration. "Utis' is either," writes Humphreys in his gloss on the passage above, "or both": a high old time, but not without a certain disorder, an attendant ambivalence.<sup>48</sup> Ultimately, however, the most authoritative gloss comes from Hal himself—when Hal, no longer himself but the newly crowned Henry V, puts his apprentice days behind him and redefines, in retrospect, the world of festivity and popular pastimes as mere confusion and disorder, to be banished like the gross terms and immodest words of any strange tongue.

Learning strange tongues or collecting strange things, rehearsing the words and ways of marginal or alien cultures, upholding idleness for a while—these are the activities of a culture in the process of extending its boundaries and reformulating itself, and they embody a form of license, a suspension of customary limits, taboos, and other modes of cultural definition, that can only be temporary, a thing of passage. To speak of the sixteenth century as a period of transition is, of course, nothing new. But the shock we continue to feel at the end of *2 Henry IV*, when Hal achieves his own transition, suggests that we have yet to comprehend the cultural process by which a

moment such as this is made inevitable—as inevitable, in its way, as the consummate Brazilian performance we encountered outside of Rouen:

FALSTAFF:

My King, my Jove! I speak to thee, my heart!

KING:

I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers;  
How ill white hairs becomes a fool and jester!  
I have long dreamt of such a kind of man,  
So surfeit-swell'd, so old, and so profane;  
But being awak'd I do despise my dream.  
Make thy body hence, and more thy grace;  
Leave gourmandizing; know the grave doth gape  
For thee thrice wider than for other men.  
Reply not to me with a fool-born jest:  
Presume not that I am the thing I was;  
For God doth know, so shall the world perceive,  
That I have turn'd away my former self;  
So will I those that kept me company.  
When thou dost hear I am as I have been,  
Approach me, and thou shalt be as thou wast,  
The tutor and feeder of my riots.  
Till then I banish thee, on pain of death . . .

(*2HIV*, V.v.46ff)

At Westminster Abbey, Falstaff and his companions are the only gross terms to be literally cast off. The old knight presents a rather large figure, however: he is a medieval Vice, a decadent noble and coward, an irrepressible spirit of wit, a religious rebel, a quite substantial embodiment of the festive impulse. "It is hard," as Empson said, "to get one's mind all round him."<sup>49</sup> And despite all the anticipations of the promised end, as well as all that has been written on the topic since Morgann, the banishment of Falstaff also remains hard for criticism to comprehend or encompass. It still takes us somehow by surprise, and can prove discomfiting. According to C. L. Barber, it is the playwright's aesthetic failure that makes us uneasy; at the point of Falstaff's rejection we slip from the world of festive comedy back into untransformed ritual, and Shakespeare slips with us.<sup>50</sup> Jonas Barish records a more significant rupture in the scene, a forcible and even violent displacement of play and audience "from the domain of comedy to the grimmer realm of history."<sup>51</sup> Yet *Henry IV* never *was* a comedy; its genre like its language is mixed throughout. What surprises us is not the event itself but the fact that the world being cast off has been so consummately rehearsed: so fully represented to us, and consequently, so fully foreclosed. We do not move into history at the end of the play so much as we feel the abrupt shock of history on the move, transforming itself and its direction, taking over rhythms proper to ritual

and imbuing them with a new morality and an unprecedented purpose. The ritual course of language identified in Warwick's simile does not merely reflect back upon Hal's career, his character or his intentions, whether good, bad, or politic; nor does it merely look forward to the end so often anticipated, to prepare us once again for the banishment we always knew was on its way. Rather, Warwick's gloss on the play opens out onto a dramaturgy much larger than Shakespeare's tetralogy, one being performed, as it were, by history itself.

The course of instruction is a curious one—a passage through certain aspects of the vernacular, strange tongues and the companions who speak them—yet it is an apt description of our experience of *Henry IV* and of the historical moment which produced it. It is a course Natalie Davis has also charted in her study of the raids upon popular culture being made by French collectors of proverbs during the same period. In French, too, the gross or vulgar—terms which were themselves in the process of acquiring the moral opprobrium they carry today—were being for a while upheld, entertained, to an extent assimilated, and then cast off. “As the language perfected itself,” Davis writes, “it pulled away from the proverbial style and rejected with disdain all words that were lowered by passing too often through the mouths of the people.”<sup>52</sup> In Elizabethan England, such disdain was increasingly focused on the popular stage—a collection of strange things, marginal pastimes and subcultures, to be sure, but one that was itself lodged on the tenuous margins of its society, as much an object of ambivalent fascination as any of the other extravagant and extraneous cultural phenomena being maintained and, for a while, upheld by the period.

A new sense of propriety was in the wings, listening to the language of the stage with an ear attuned to the gross and improper. Words “fetched from Latin inkhorne or borrowed of strangers” are seldom pleasant, according to Puttenham,

... saving perchaunce to the common people, who reioyce much to be at playes and enterludes, and besides their natural ignoraunce, have at all times their eares so attentive to the matter, and their eyes upon the shewes of the stage, that they take little heede to the cunning of the rime and therefore be as well satisfied with that which is grosse, as with any other finer and more delicate.<sup>53</sup>

Shakespeare could hardly have been unaware of the fragility of the social and cultural conditions that made possible the range of language, character, and ideology that we properly locate at the heart of his dramaturgy. He was an Elizabethan playwright, which is to say that he was continually reminded of the potential (if not inevitable) consummation of the cultural license enjoyed by popular drama. His company was annually rehearsed by the Court and barely tolerated by a city which, quite against its own will, also provided its livelihood. London annually threatened that livelihood, but in 1597—the year of composition for *1 Henry IV*—it seemed on the verge of translating threat into reality for the first time in nearly fifty years. The city had won an unprecedented order from the Privy Council, calling for “the present staie and fynall suppressing of . . . stage plays, as well at the Theatre, Curten, banckside, as in all

other places in and about this Citie.”<sup>54</sup> It is difficult today to say why the order had such little effect; it was impossible to predict at the time that it would not severely constrict the world Shakespeare inhabited—the world so amply represented in the “prodigally lavish” economy of *Henry IV*, and so fully proscribed at its close.

## V

History moves at a different pace than drama does, as Shakespeare’s histories always remind us; the world that felt threatened in 1597, the world being rehearsed and maintained by the dominant cultures of early modern society as they redefined themselves and their domains, was upheld for a while longer. When history does move, however, it moves along the lines intimated by Shakespeare’s second tetralogy: toward the regulation of the vernacular into a clear and ordered discourse, and toward the suppression of popular ritual and pastimes that Weber christened as “the disenchantment of the world.”<sup>55</sup>

In England, the disenchantment was more abrupt, the shock of history on the move more pointedly dramatic; as a result, the paradoxical process by which such a conclusion is achieved or made inevitable also comes into clearer focus. An anecdote from the Commonwealth reveals in miniature the outlines of that process.<sup>56</sup> In 1649, a Parliamentary soldier entered a village church in Surrey, at the moment when evening services were drawing to a close. He bore a lantern in one hand and four candles in the other, and declared that he carried a message from God, to be delivered to the parishioners. Denied the use of the pulpit, he went into the churchyard to make his message known. His vision consisted of five points, each an example of what was “merely ceremonial” in the Church, and to be abolished: the Sabbath, tithes, ministers, magistrates, and finally the Bible itself, which was to be rejected as a repository of ceremonies and practices no longer necessary, “now Christ himself is in Glory amongst us.” But the abolition of all ceremony was ceremoniously conducted. For each of his cardinal points, the soldier lit a candle from the lantern; describing the ceremony to be abolished, he extinguished the corresponding flame and declared the feat accomplished. When he reached the Bible he set fire to its leaves, allowed it to be fully consumed, then put out the lantern itself, declaring, “And here my fifth light is extinguished.” What he performed was a working through of Church ceremony, a last rite for Christian ritual. That he employed ceremony to extinguish ceremony was a contradiction, but just such a contradiction was fundamental to the recreation of early modern culture: a process that begins in the adoption of the strange, and that ends with a full entrance into and recreation of alien or residual cultures, consummately rehearsed and thus consummately foreclosed.

It is a process that Hal first performs proleptically when he steps forward to announce the shape of his future “reformation.” He steps out of the play that is at once his context and his vehicle, and in a sense he steps into an historical moment that does not yet exist, except on the stage he occupies. It is a position that allows the gross

terms and improprieties of Shakespeare's language to be observed, as if in retrospect; for all the attacks on the stage, it is a form of observation or surveillance, a view of the strange or gross as Error, that Dryden, looking back on Shakespeare from the stage of history itself, associates with the Restoration:

Neither would I be understood, when I speak of impropriety of language, either wholly to accuse the last age, or to excuse the present; and least of all, myself; for all writers have their imperfections and failings; but I may safely conclude in the general, that our improprieties are less frequent, and less gross than theirs. One testimony of this is undeniable; that we are the first who have observed them; and, certainly, to observe errors is a great step to the correcting of them.<sup>57</sup>

Our course through the rehearsal of cultures in the Renaissance suggests that the observation of Error is a more complex and paradoxical process than Dryden's self-satisfaction can quite comprehend. If Dryden's language is, in his terms, less gross or improper, this is only because Shakespeare's language was what it was. The first stage of Dryden's observation was not passive, but an active participation in all that passed for the gross, the improper, the anomalous, the strange.

The terms are ones Shakespeare rehearses once again, in the last play of the Lancastrian cycle. Against Dryden's retrospective on the state of Shakespeare's language, we should juxtapose the playwright's own rearward glance at the improprieties that occupied the ambivalent center of Hal's prodigality. I began with a list of strange things gathered together in an Elizabethan wonder-cabinet, and would conclude with another list, a strange wonder in its own peculiar way, as recited by Katharine of Valois:

Le foot, et le count? O Seigneur Dieu! ils sont les mots de son mauvais, corruptible, gros, et impudique, et non pour les dames d'honneur d'user. Je ne voudrais prononcer ces mots devant les seigneurs de France, pour tout le monde. Foh! le foot et le count! Néanmoins je reciterai une autre fois ma leçon ensemble: d' hand, de fingre, d' nails, de arm, d' elbow, de nick, de sin, de foot, le count.

(*Henry V*, III.iv.52ff)

Marx notoriously suggested that the major events of history occur twice: once as tragedy, and again as farce. Tragedy may be too strong a term for the catastrophe of Hal's language lesson, but Katharine's scene of instruction is indeed borrowed from French farce, and as such is nearly unique in Elizabethan drama.<sup>58</sup> What we have is a fully staged language lesson, conducted in one strange tongue and concerned with another; quite literally, Katharine's list is a recital or rehearsal of gross terms. Most striking after *Henry IV* is the ease with which Katharine first rejects what is gross and dishonorable and then revisits it, recites it anew. The sign of that ease is "néanmoins": once the strange has been proscribed as gross Error, it can be allowed to return, but in a much reduced and vitiated form. Like Katharine's gross terms, Falstaff and his companions will return, or so we are promised—but not until "their conversations / Appear more wise and modest to the world" (2*HIV*, V.v.100). The



old knight passes with a great deal less ease than Katharine's gross terms; his rehearsal reaches its final conclusion off-stage, and "néanmoins" is the word missing from his babbling end. Nevertheless, as Katharine would say, he returns to the stage in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, where he will "speak like an Anthropophaginian" (IV.v.8): still an emblem of strange tongues and unsavory cultures, but reduced to the only stage provided for such repeat performances—that of farce.

## Notes

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1. See *La nature et les prodiges: l'insolite au 16<sup>e</sup> siècle, en France* (Genève, 1977), p. 460. For a related study of the shifting cultural significance of "monsters," see Katharine Park and Lorraine J. Daston, "Unnatural Conceptions: The Study of Monsters in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France and England," *Past and Present* 92 (1981), 20–54.
2. *Thomas Platter's Travels in England, 1599*, tr. Clare Williams (London, 1937), pp. 171–73. I have modified Williams' translation slightly. For the original see *Thomas Platters des Jungeren Englandfahrt im Jahre 1599*, ed. Hans Hecht (Halle, 1929).
3. The most thorough study is still Julius von Schlosser, *Die Kunst und Wunderkammer der Spätrenaissance* (Leipzig, 1908). See also Alma Stephanie Wittlin, *The Museum: Its History and its Tasks in Education* (London, 1949); the sections on the early collection at Dresden in *The Splendors of Dresden: Five Centuries of Art Collecting in Dresden* (New York, 1978), pp. 19–25, 75–77; Niels von Holst, *Creators, Collectors, and Connoisseurs: The Anatomy of Public Taste from Antiquity to the Present Day* (New York, 1967), pp. 103–107, 144. E. H. Gombrich makes brief comments of interest in "The Museum: Past, Present, and Future," *Critical Inquiry* 3 (1977), 449.
4. *Works*, ed. James Spedding et al. (London, 1859), vol. III, pp. 330–31.
5. Cited by Margaret Hodgen in her useful and thorough *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, 1964), p. 302.
6. The phrase is Jonson's, referring to the anti-masque of *The Masque of Queens*; see *Ben Jonson: Selected Masques*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven, 1975), p. 81.
7. *Voyage fait en la Terre du Brazil* (1578); cited by J. H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New* (London, 1970), p. 22.
8. A contemporary account of the voyage, written by George Best, appears under the title *The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher*, ed. R. Collinson (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1863). For the fate of the family, see Sidney Lee, *Elizabethan and Other Essays*, ed. F. S. Boas (Oxford, 1929), p. 275; also J. R. Hale, "Geographical and Mental Horizons," in *The Age of the Renaissance*, ed. Denys Hays (London, 1967), p. 335.
9. Henri II's entry was chronicled in two prose and one verse account. The fullest, from which I have quoted, is *C'est la Deduction du sumptueux ordre plaisantz spectacles et magnifiques theatre dressez, et exhibez par les citoiens de Rouen ville Metropolitane du payes de Normandie, A la sacre Maieste du Tres Christian Roy de France, Henry second, leur souverain Seigneur, Et a Tres illustre dame, ma dame Katharine de Medicis* (Rouen, 1551); rpt. as *Entree a Rouen du Roi Henri II et de la Reine Catherine de Medicis* (Rouen, 1885), K3<sup>v</sup>.

- An excellent full-length study of the entry has been made by Margaret M. McGowan, "Forms and Themes in Henri II's Entry into Rouen," *Renaissance Drama*, n.s. 1 (1968), 199–252.
10. For the history of the use of a sciamachy in royal entries, see Sidney Anglo, "The Evolution of the Early Tudor Disguising, Pageant, and Mask," *Renaissance Drama*, n.s. 1 (1968), 13–18.
  11. *Calendar of State Papers (Spanish)*, 1550–1552, X, 182.
  12. See Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York, 1962), pp. 33–69.
  13. The French ship is shown in an illuminated edition of the *Entrée*; see the reproduction in Roy Strong, *Splendor at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and the Theater of Power* (Boston, 1973), pp. 88–89.
  14. *Calendar of State Papers (Spanish)*, 182.
  15. The one exception was the exclusion of the previous day's triumphal references to the acquisition of Boulogne—suppressed, as Simon Renard reports, in order not to offend the English spectators present. See McGowan, "Forms and Themes," p. 80.
  16. On conspicuous expenditure and its devastating effects on the English aristocracy, see Lawrence Stone, "The Anatomy of the English Aristocracy," *Economic History Review* 18 (1948), 106–28.
  17. For efforts to "justify" Renaissance interest in other cultures as a precursor of Enlightenment ethnography, see Hodgen, *Early Anthropology*, and to a lesser degree, John Howland Rowe, "The Renaissance Foundations of Anthropology," *American Anthropologist* 67 (1965), 1–14. For an illuminating counter-argument, see James A. Boon, "Comparative De-enlightenment: Paradox and Limits in the History of Ethnology," *Daedalus* 109 (1980), 73–91.
  18. *An Apology for Actors* (1612); rpt. in *Shakespeare Society Papers* (London, 1843), vol. XV, p. 40.
  19. *Autobiographical Tracts of John Dee*, ed. James Crossley (London: The Chetham Society, 1851).
  20. *Statutes of the Realm*, I, 47.
  21. J. R. Hale, "Sixteenth-Century Explanations of War and Violence," *Past and Present* 51 (1971), 6.
  22. Cited by Christopher Hill, *Change and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1974), p. 20.
  23. Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, tr. Richard Howard (New York, 1965), pp. 36–37.
  24. Bradbrook, *The Living Monument: Shakespeare and the Theatre of his Time* (Cambridge, Eng., 1976), p. 43.
  25. Reprinted in the *New Shakespeare Society*, ed. F. V. Furnival (London, 1877–82), Series VI, pt. 4–6, 149.
  26. *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (New York, 1968), p. 149.
  27. Cited by Natalie Z. Davis, "Proverbial Wisdom and Popular Errors," in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975), p. 249.
  28. *Selected Writings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (Chicago, 1968), p. 227.
  29. See Davis, pp. 245–64.
  30. *Platter's Travels*, p. 170. See also E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford, 1923), vol. II, pp. 365–66.
  31. All quotations of *Henry IV* and *Henry V* are from the Arden Shakespeare, ed. A. C. Humphreys.

32. Barish, "The Turning Away of Prince Hal," *Shakespeare Studies* 1 (1965), 13.
33. See *The Statutes of Wales*, ed. Ivor Bowen (London, 1908), p. 75.
34. *An Epitome of the Psalmes, or briefe meditations upon the same*, tr. Richard Taverner (1539); cited by Richard F. Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language* (Stanford, 1966), p. 29.
35. See the preceding notes for Jones. Also useful is J. L. Moore, *Tudor-Stuart Views on the Growth, Status, and Destiny of the English Language*, in *Studien zur Englischen Philologie* 41 (1910).
36. *The First Part of the Elementarie* (1582; rpt. Menston, England, 1970), p. 158.
37. Robert Weimann, "Shakespeare and the Study of Metaphor," *New Literary History* 6 (1974), 166.
38. From the prefatory epistle to *The Shepheardes Calendar*, by "E. K."; in *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (London, 1961), p. 417.
39. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, tr. H. Iswolsky (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 470–71.
40. "Of Repenting," in Montaigne's *Essayes*, tr. John Florio (New York, 1933), p. 731.
41. Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster* (1570); cited by Jones, *Triumph of the English Language*, p. 15.
42. "The Excellencie of the English Tongue" (1596?), in *The Survey of Cornwall*, ed. F. E. Halliday (London, 1953), p. 305. Carew's "towardness" is an example of what Stephen Greenblatt defines as Renaissance "improvisation" in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago, 1980), pp. 222–24.
43. "Falstaff and Mr. Dover Wilson," *Kenyon Review* 15 (1953), 247. Shakespeare does not employ the legend directly, but at the heart of its popular acceptance lay Henry's Elizabethan image as the first truly *English* King of the Realm. Whatever its historical validity, Henry V does appear to have exerted a considerable influence in determining Chancery English as what would become, by Shakespeare's day, the standard of the nation. See Malcolm Richardson, "Henry V, the English Chancery, and Chancery English," *Speculum* 55 (1980), 726–50.
44. On the cultural heterogeneity of *Henry IV* and Hal's appetites, see Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis*, tr. W. R. Trask (Princeton, 1974), pp. 312–33.
45. For an insightful reading of Hal's rehearsal of Francis—focused upon the Prince's studied efforts to awaken, even momentarily, the apprentice's discontent—see Stephen Greenblatt, "Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion," *Glyph* 8 (1981), 40–60.

Greenblatt's emphasis on the "recording" of alien voices complements the focus, in these pages, on the rehearsal of strange cultures. The fact that both essays were produced independently and work from quite different primary materials toward a similar perspective on *Henry IV* is a sign, undoubtedly, of the influence of Greenblatt's previous work on my thinking; but the coincidence suggests, as well, that the recording/rehearsal of the strange is a significant process, both in the period and in Shakespeare's second tetralogy.

46. See Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley, 1977).
47. Glendower's Welsh certainly was. Unlike Cornish and other Celtic tongues, Welsh resisted the pressures of assimilation and suppression quite ably, despite juridical efforts to control or outlaw it; Welsh remained a strange tongue, a discomfiting reminder that Wales continued to be a foreign and hostile colony, ruled but never quite subjected by English power; see R. R. Davies, "Colonial Wales," *Past and Present* 65 (1974), 3–23, and "Race Relations in Post-Conquest Wales: Confrontation and Compromise," in *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1974), pp. 32–56.

In a period devoted to the collection of alien customs, persons, and languages, under-

standing and use were not necessarily interdependent. In November of 1608, Captain Peter Wynne encountered a previously unknown tribe of Indians while on an exploratory expedition from Jamestown. Their dialect was unfamiliar, but the civilian authorities on the expedition solved the linguistic dilemma without apparent difficulty. Noting that the natives' tongue sounded as strange to them as Wynne's Welsh, and perhaps even similar to it, they assigned him the task of the translator. "The people of Monacan speak a far differing language from the subjects of Powhatan," as Wynne himself reported to Sir John Egerton on November 21, "their pronunciation being very like Welsh, so that gentlemen in our company desired me to be their interpreter."

48. See the Arden edition, p. 63 n. 19.                      49. Empson, p. 221.
50. Barber, pp. 217ff.                      51. Barish, p. 10.                      52. Davis, p. 256.
53. *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589; rpt. Westminster: A. Constable & Co., 1895), p. 96.
54. See Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, IV, 221–22, for the letter from the Mayor to the Privy Council. Glynne Wickham calls the order "a watershed in English theatrical history . . . its advent spelt the end of a predominantly amateur and casual theatre and the start of the strictly professional and commercial theatre that we know"; see "The Privy Council Order of 1597 for the Destruction of all London's Theatres," *The Elizabethan Theatre* 1 (1969), 21.
55. Weber, *General Economic History*, tr. F. H. Knight (New York, 1927), p. 265.
56. From the *Anarchia Anglicana* (1649); the passage is cited in full by Alan Simpson, *Puritanism in Old and New England* (Chicago, 1955), pp. 54–55.
57. "The Defence of the Epilogue," in *Critical and Miscellaneous Prose Works*, ed. E. Malone (London, 1800), p. 232. For the history of such "surveillance," understood in Dryden's sense of observing error; see Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (Paris, 1975).
58. See M. L. Radoff, "Influence of French Farce in *Henry V* and *The Merry Wives*," *Modern Language Notes* 48 (1933), 427–35.

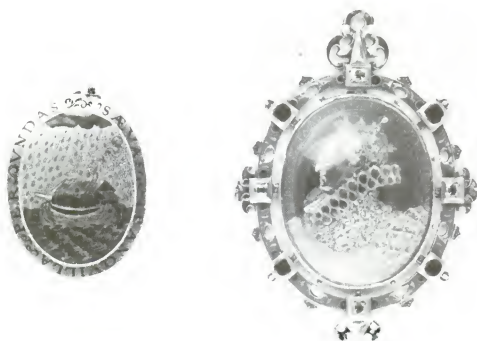
## **"Secret" Arts: Elizabethan Miniatures and Sonnets**

HAVING RESOLVED "to open a good part of her inward mind" to Sir James Melville, ambassador from Mary Queen of Scots, and professing "a great desire" to see her "good sister" (which "desired meeting could not be so hastily brought to pass"), Queen Elizabeth led Melville into the heart of her labyrinthine state apartments at Whitehall and unveiled to him her collection of miniatures.<sup>1</sup> Melville's account of the 1564 incident merits quoting in full. "She took me to her bed-chamber," he recalls,

and opened a little cabinet, wherein were divers little pictures wrapt within paper, and their names written with her own hand upon the papers. Upon the first that she took up was written, "My Lord's picture." I held the candle, and pressed to see that picture so named. She appeared loath to let me see it; yet my importunity prevailed for a sight thereof, and found it to be the Earl of Leicester's picture. I desired that I might have it to carry home to my Queen; which she refused, alleging that she had but that one picture of his. I said, your Majesty hath here the original; for I perceived him at the farthest part of the chamber, speaking with Secretary Cecil. Then she took out the Queen's picture, and kissed it; and I adventured to kiss her hand, for the great love therein evidenced to my mistress. She showed me also a fair ruby, as great as a tennis-ball. I desired that she would either send it, or my Lord Leicester's picture, as a token unto the Queen. She said, if the Queen would follow her counsel, that she would in process of time get all she had; that in the meantime she was resolved in a token to send her with me a fair diamond.<sup>2</sup>

This is an intensely intimate moment in a series of political maneuverings between Elizabeth and Melville over the question of Mary's marriage to Leicester and the English succession. One gets the sense almost of being let in on a secret as Elizabeth penetrates outer layers of herself—her "bed-chamber," her "little cabinet," her personally inscribed paper wrappings—to reveal her highly prized miniatures (valued equally with a ruby "as great as a tennis-ball") and her sincere feelings for Mary. The sense of secrecy as Elizabeth opens herself up to Melville is highlighted by her momentary hesitancy at revelation and by the "littleness" of the pictures that requires Melville to "press" forward and hold up his candle for more light.

Yet at the center of this very private self-revelation is a mystery. Why does Elizabeth, who instigated the negotiations for a marriage between Mary and Leicester, grant to Melville "a sight" of Leicester's little picture but refuse to give away the miniature entirely, especially when an exchange of pictures in political



FIGURES 1–4 (*above, opposite*). Ascribed to Nicholas Hilliard, *Armada Jewel*, after 1588. Contains portrait of Elizabeth I dated 1580 by Hilliard, opposite right; outside lid, above left; front of locket, above right; inside lid, opposite left,  $2\frac{3}{4} \times 2$  in., Victoria and Albert Museum (M81-1935). Photo: museum.

matchmaking was the norm? Why does she answer with silence Melville's argument that she has "the original" Leicester, turning instead to an expression of her sincere affection for Mary's picture? (This evasion images Elizabeth's "*answer, ANSWERLESS*" to Parliament on the question of her own marriage.)<sup>3</sup> While appearing to open herself up to Melville, Elizabeth remains closed—just as her reasons for arranging the Mary-Leicester marriage, which could only insult Mary, remain hidden. Indeed, each of her gestures toward sincere self-revelation is self-concealing, cloaked in the artifice of politics. Elizabeth's protestations of her "great desire" to meet Mary, when in fact she assiduously avoided ever meeting her, her choosing to unveil specifically Leicester's and Mary's pictures, her wish that Mary "would follow her counsel," all are political messages encoding and encoded in Elizabeth's private moment of self-revelation.

The uncovering of her secret self was a political "game" for Elizabeth, as intimate, sincere, and conniving as a game of cards between close friends. In both foreign and domestic relations, the queen played on the interface between public and private self, handling threats from foreign princes by dangling the



possibility of marriage with herself and managing her courtiers at home by encouraging the revival of courtly love: "Her lovers were her ministers, and her ministers were her lovers." And in the very process of making intimacy political and politics intimate, Elizabeth maintained a hiddenness: "Hir wisest men and beste Counsellors were oft sore troublede to knowe hir wyll in matters of State," complains Sir John Harington, "So covertly did she pass hir iudgmente."<sup>4</sup>

This secrecy of Elizabeth's—this private, inward turning that simultaneously takes a public form like politics—characterizes not simply Elizabeth but the Elizabethan age for which she was the focus. Its primary literary expression, and my ultimate concern, is the fashionable "little poem" of love or sonnet. We can intimately assess the Elizabethan sonnet, however, through the contemporaneous art Linda Bradley Salamon recently analogized to the sonnet: the private little miniature. The leading Elizabethan artists of miniatures and sonnets—respectively, Nicholas Hilliard and Sir Philip Sidney—particularly address problems of self and self-expression and, while in ironic contradiction, find an answer in the same "game" of secrecy: in representing through "public" forms (of ornament, convention, rhetoric) the "private" and "true" self, a representation that necessarily could never be *presented*.<sup>5</sup>

**"Publishing" the Miniature:  
"In small volumes, in private manner"**

An illuminating map to the Elizabethan presentation or "publication" of the self in miniatures is provided by the architectural layout of rooms in

Elizabethan houses.<sup>6</sup> Since the miniature was a peculiarly aristocratic fashion, I look specifically to the houses of the upper class.<sup>7</sup>

We first note in the apartment plans of aristocratic homes the co-location of miniatures and private rooms. The Elizabethan aristocracy commonly sought out the most private room of the house—the bedchamber, or its attached closet or cabinet room—to view between intimates their miniatures. Compare this practice with the method of presenting oil paintings in relatively public rooms of the house, such as the gallery, for all to see. The difference here lies in the fact that miniature painting (called at the time painting “in little” or “limning”) directly countered the public impersonality of full-scale painting. The oil painting pulled back to view its subject publicly amidst all his or her symbols of rank and office. The miniature, on the contrary, concentrated on its subject personally, focusing only for the most part on the face and shoulders, perhaps also the hands. The oil painting represented “a statesman, a soldier, a court-favourite in all his regalia.” The miniature showed “a lover, a mistress, a wife, an intimate friend.”<sup>8</sup> Even the queen’s limnings (at least up into the 1580s) were personal in opposition to her public portraits: representations more of love mistress than of royal queen. Above all the miniature was a love token, and it is as an expression of such private emotions as love that it sought the intimacy of the bedroom.

In a regal demonstration of this close alignment of miniature and private room, Sir Henry Unton, Elizabeth’s ambassador to France, revealed his miniature in the royal bedroom of Henry IV. The king had led Unton into his chamber





seeking a kind of locker-room privacy to discuss his mistress, Madame de Monceaux. There, “in a privat Place” of the king’s bedroom, “between his Bed and the Wall,” Unton mentions his own limned “Mistress,” Elizabeth. Almost confidentially he tells the king,

that if, without Offence I might speake it, that I had the Picture of a farr more excellent Mistress, and yet did her Picture come farr short of her Perfection of Beauty. As you love me (sayd he) shew it me, if you have it about you. I made some Difficulties; yett, uppon his Importunity, offred it unto his Viewe verie seacretly, houlding it still in my Hande.<sup>9</sup>

Unton virtually reenacts Elizabeth’s guarded showing of her own miniatures to Melville. Both queen and subject in the privacy of a royal bedroom behave as if they were revealing most prized possessions. Just as Elizabeth “appeared loath” to let Melville see her limnings, so Unton “made some Difficulties” to Henry. In both cases they only show the miniatures upon “Importunity,” offer them “verie seacretly,” and never let them out of their hands. And here again, accentuating the sense of closeness of unveiling in a private room, is the littleness of the limning “viewed,” affirms Hilliard, “of necessity in hand near unto the eye” (87). Viewers could not stand back disinterestedly from a miniature as with a large-scale painting. They had to “press” together, to borrow Melville’s word, getting intimately close to the limning and each other.

In order to experience this highly personal moment, however, prospective viewers of miniatures had to penetrate through to the private room. The bed-



FIGURES 5–7 (*opposite, left*). Perhaps by Nicholas Hilliard, *Gresley Jewel*, before 1585. Contains portraits of Catherine Walsingham (c. 1580–85) and Sir Thomas Gresley (c. 1590) by Hilliard, left; closed lid, opposite left; back of locket, opposite right, 3 in. (including pearl), Pennington-Mellor-Munthe Trust. Produced from *Princely Magnificence: Court Jewels of the Renaissance, 1500–1630*, Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition catalogue (London, 1980), no. 46.

chamber or closet in sixteenth-century royal palaces, as well as in the great houses modeled on royal apartment plans, was situated increasingly at the heart of a succession of public rooms. The outer chambers would become progressively less public as one penetrated further inward. On his way to view Elizabeth's miniatures, for instance, Melville would have passed through—among many antechambers—the very public gallery, where the general court gathered, through the more private Presence Chamber, where only select courtiers passed, through the even more private Privy Chamber, where the chosen few assembled to discuss “the most secret transactions” of state, before finally arriving at the inner sanctum of the royal bedchamber.<sup>10</sup> The sense is of inward penetration, but of necessarily having to pass through outer, public enclosures to experience that inwardness. This effect was intensified when the goal was the private miniature. For once within the innermost room, one still had to pass through outer “rooms” that continued to decrease in their public nature to view the miniature. The outermost room or enclosure within the bedroom was a small chest or cabinet box, richly ornamented for public display (Elizabeth's miniatures were probably kept in one of the “two little cabinets of exquisite work” noted by a German visitor to Whitehall in 1578).<sup>11</sup> Within these enclosures lay yet another “room”: consisting usually not of plain paper wrappings like those containing Elizabeth's miniatures, but of turned ivory boxes, still decorative for public showing, although not as sumptuous as cabinets. Within these resided the last, transparent “room”—a sheet of crystal—behind which one could finally see the miniature.<sup>12</sup>

“Publication” of the miniature, then, while creating a sense of inwardness—and thus appearing to respond to a real need for expressing the inner, private self—could only be arrived at through outer, public rooms, whether political chambers or ornamental encasings. As if acknowledging this fact, the miniature as early as the 1560s left the privacy of the bedroom for the arena of the court, and began to be worn. Our architectural metaphor might at first seem to collapse here. However, though initially appearing at court in an open frame, the miniature from the 1570s on was placed within finely enameled gold locket (often called “picture boxes”).<sup>13</sup> To view the private miniature, therefore, one still had to penetrate an outer, highly public “room”—the ornamental picture case richly decorated for all to see. The *Armada Jewel* (figs. 1–4), containing a miniature of Elizabeth, vividly illustrates in its symbols the necessary route of passing through the public to the private. Looking at the jewel and then opening it, we penetrate Elizabeth, queen of state and church, to discover Elizabeth, Unton's “Mistress” of beauty. Roy Strong enacts this movement in his description of the jewel:

The outside of the case begins by an initial celebration of Elizabeth as the queen with a formal imperial profile image on the obverse together with her titles. On the reverse we progress from her secular to her ecclesiastical authority as governor of the *Ecclesia Anglicana* in the Ark of the Reformed Church sailing safely through the troubled seas. The locket opens to a contemplation of the private world of the heroine of the sonnets, a paean

on her as the Lady, as 'Astraea, Queen of Beauty', whose pictured image is mirrored by the rose enamelled on the interior of the lid.<sup>14</sup>

Sprinkled with jewels and flowers, her ruff framing her heart-shaped face like the petals of the rose on the inside of the lid, Elizabeth the lady appears with a fresh, delicate intimacy diametrically opposed to the stony-faced, official profile of her on the outside. Yet the queen outside provides the passage to the lady within.

The outer representation of the queen also protects and hides the inner lady, just as the many antechambers to the royal bedroom did not simply offer access to Elizabeth but also defended and concealed her. The rich artifice of the miniature case itself served this double function. The *Gresley Jewel* (figs. 5–7), for example—by tradition a gift from Elizabeth on the marriage of Catherine Walsingham to Sir Thomas Gresley—flaunts and yet tells little of the couple's love. The exterior of the pendant is gold enameled in a variety of clear colors and set with table-cut rubies, emeralds, and pearls. The back sports an intricate pattern of enameled pied flowers. The front shows an onyx cameo of a black woman. No personal connection (as a servant, for instance) appears to have existed between the black and the married couple. Rather, busts of blacks were a convention in the jewelry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, "combining the appeal of the exotic with advantageous use of the layers of an onyx."<sup>15</sup> They are impersonal artifice, in other words, like the enameled gold and precious jewels, and in its very impersonality this rich ornament hides the private love of the couple whose pictures the pendant encases. Only the two little golden cupids, which aim their arrows at either side of the case, point to the secret love within.

The most striking example I have found of the twinned self-revealing, self-concealing nature of the miniature case, which also restores the case to its social as well as its physical setting, is a curious story of a "fyne jewell" of Lady Derby. The incident is recounted to the earl of Shrewsbury by William Browne in a letter dated 1602. Enclosing some verses composed by Sir Robert Cecil and set to music by Hales, Browne explains,

The occasion was, as I hear, that the young Lady of Darby wearing about her neck, in her bosom, a picture which was in a dainty tablet, the Queen, espying itt, asked what fyne jewell that was: The Lady Darby was curious to excuse the shewing of itt, butt the Queen wold have itt, and opening itt, and fynding itt to be Mr. Secretarye's, snatcht itt away, and tyed itt upon her shoe, and walked long with itt there; then she tooke itt thence, and pinned itt on her elbow, and wore itt som tyme there also; which Mr. Secretary being told of, made these verses, and had Hales to sing them in his chamber. . . . I do boldly send these things to your Lordship which I wold not do to any els, for I heare they are very secret.<sup>16</sup>

What exactly Browne means when he affirms "these things . . . are very secrett" is itself secret. Is he referring to the love lyrics of Cecil sung to the queen in his

FIGURE 8. Nicholas Hilliard,  
*Unknown Lady*, c. 1585–90.  
 1¾ x 1½ in., Victoria and  
 Albert Museum (P2-1974).  
 Photo: museum.



bedchamber (we are told, “Some of the verses argew that he repynes not thoghe her Majesty please to grace others, and contents himself with the favour he hath”)?<sup>17</sup> Or to the scene with the miniature that provoked this poetry? One cannot say for sure, though the statement seems all-inclusive. Certainly Lady Derby’s “picture” is most secret: not only concealed “in a dainty tablet” but hidden “in her bosom.” Her attempt to keep her miniature secret, “to excuse the shewing of itt,” is the exact same response we saw in Elizabeth and in Unton when asked to reveal their limnings. The reaction seems almost instinctive. There is no explanation for Lady Derby’s reluctance to uncover her miniature (it is, after all, only a picture of her uncle) other than the fact that it is *her* miniature: a part of her private self, her personal secret, to be revealed only to those *she* chooses. Elizabeth violates Lady Derby’s intimacy in forcing her to uncover it.

While momentarily failing her in this instance, however, Lady Derby’s “fyne jewell” had allowed her to carry a core of privacy and sincerity—her “real” self—into the open court of artifice. Portability is in this sense as important as the richness of the case.<sup>18</sup> The miniature that can be “held in the hand” can also be “snatcht” away, “tyed” to a shoe, “walked long,” and “pinned” on the elbow. Elizabeth can thus whimsically play with Lady Derby’s little pendant, giving full expression to her own individuality. Even here, however, the self is “wrapt.” Like the miniature in its case, which is essentially a heart of privacy wrapt in ornament, Elizabeth’s self-expression is cloaked in ostentatious self-display: a kind of conscious public posing like Cecil’s posing as the conventional courtly lover.

And this brings me to my crucial point. The Lady Derby/Elizabeth incident suggests—and I will maintain—that the “true” Elizabethan self expressed in publishing the miniature was always hidden, even from intimates, by the very nature of the artifice that published it. For that matter, returning to our architectural model, even the most private rooms in Elizabethan houses (and certainly the royal bedchamber) remained essentially public, readily open to servants and visitors.<sup>19</sup> While Elizabeth and Melville conducted their intimate interview, Leicester and Cecil conversed “at the farthest part of the chamber.” (The obverse of this

FIGURE 9. Nicholas Hilliard,  
*Young Man Among Roses*,  
 c. 1587–88. 5 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 2 $\frac{3}{4}$   
 in., Victoria and Albert  
 Museum (P163-1910).  
 Photo: museum.



public rendering of Elizabeth's bedchamber is the personal denotation—"Privy"—for her political chamber.) The Elizabethan aristocracy, one might say, never really arrived at an inner, private center in passing through the long corridor of outer, public "rooms." Nowhere is this more evident than when the ornamental room of the miniature case was opened and the limning within viewed. I maintain my claim for a unique period in the history of self-representation—the late Elizabethan age (from about 1570 to 1600)—during which time the miniature craze arose under the impetus of Nicholas Hilliard. Having thus so far in our study passed through public rooms in order to view the private miniature, we must look specifically at Hilliard's limnings. Concentrating in our viewing on his

innovative techniques and style, we will trace in Hilliard's miniatures a growing artifice of secrecy that culminates in his masterpiece, *Young Man Among Roses*.

### Hilliard's Secret Art of Limning

The Hilliard limning viewed "within" undoubtedly substantiates the sense one gets, in passing through public rooms or ornamental casings, of penetrating to a real, private self. Hilliard's miniatures distinctly represent, in Eric Mercer's words, "a personality."<sup>20</sup> In his own words, Hilliard sought to "catch" the "lovely graces, witty smilings" and "stolen glances" of his sitters (77). Seeking truthfully to represent such immediate intimacies, Hilliard reiterated his devotion to "the truth of the line," the unshadowed line-stroke that constitutes his calligraphic style (85). He cites in support of his aesthetic a conversation with the queen. Elizabeth, he notes, affirmed "that best to show oneself needeth no shadow of place, but rather the open light," and therefore chose to be limned "in the open alley of a goodly garden, where no tree was near, nor any shadow at all." Hilliard concurred, reasoning that the "grosser line" of shadowing mars the in-close vision of limning. He adds psychological and ethical force to his aesthetic reasons. Standing in an "open alley" in the clear sight of heaven signifies one's purity of soul: "For beauty and good favour is like clear truth, which is not shamed with the light, nor needs to be obscured." Shadowing, on the contrary, which "smutteth" the purity of colors, is "like truth ill told" and can only signify a hidden "ill cause" (85–87). Although Hilliard here uses terms like "open" and "clear" to stress the truthfulness of the self he sought to limn, the kind of sincerity and intimacy he describes was really at home, as we have seen with the aristocracy, within the closed privacy of the bedroom or locket. Indeed, throughout his treatise Hilliard insists that his truthful limning is for gentlemen alone and most private: limning "is for the service of noble persons very meet, in small volumes, in private manner" (65); "It is a kind of gentle painting . . . it is secret" (63).<sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless, if Hilliard sought truthfully to limn such personal emotions as commonly sought for expression the private room, he actually represented the true inner self through the public room of art: that is, ornament. Most of Hilliard's innovations in limning extended the ornamental qualities specifically of limning's parent arts, goldsmithing and manuscript illumination (*limn* derives from the verb *illuminate*).<sup>22</sup> Hilliard's emphasis on line without shadow, for instance, extended the calligraphic style of goldsmith and illuminator into an intricate rendering of his sitter's hair, clothes, and jewels. The portrait of an *Unknown Lady* (fig. 8) supremely expresses this formalized, calligraphic style: the lady's face is framed by minutely drawn curls and a complexly patterned ruff, whose design extends transformed into the ornamental tulips of her bodice and the looping gold thread of her sleeves.<sup>23</sup> Hilliard furthered the decorativeness of



FIGURE 10. Nicholas Hilliard, *Man Against a Background of Flames*, c. 1595. 2 $\frac{5}{8}$  x 2 $\frac{1}{8}$  in., Victoria and Albert Museum (P5-1917). Photo: museum.

such patterned “lines” by adopting the fresh, bright colors of his sources. Himself both limner and goldsmith, he passionately stressed the bond between limning colors and precious stones, insisting “that there are besides white and black but five perfect colours in the world”: amethyst murrey, ruby red, sapphire blue, emerald green, and topaz yellow (101). He even invented new painting techniques to counterfeit jewels as well as metals and the textures of materials. While earlier miniaturists would use gold as a powdered pigment, points out Jim Murrell, Hilliard treated it as a metal, thickly applying it to the edges and inscriptions of his works, and then burnishing it “so that the soft gold particles would merge together, presenting a continuous surface of gleaming metal.”<sup>24</sup> The gold mounts for gems were built up in relief, and the gems themselves duplicated in their transparency and luster as well as their color. Even the starched lace ruffs, as in the *Unknown Lady*, would be counterfeited in three dimensions, the paint virtually dribbled onto the surface. The net product of these goldsmith-limning innovations was a decorative representation far removed from the painterly simplicity of Hilliard’s predecessors or followers: “a highly stylized jewel-like object, whose rich variety of colours and metals became a perfect complement to the jewelled lockets in which so many miniatures were set.”<sup>25</sup>

Hilliard’s limning procedure illustrates especially well the necessary route of authentic self-representation *through* artifice. After meticulously grinding and washing his pigments, Hilliard would first paint onto vellum the “ground” or “carnation” of his portrait. This involved a swift application of flesh color (very pale in hue) where the face was to be. He would next, working from the outside in, lightly outline the head and features of the face before painting the background and clothing. Ornament was then built up in a three-dimensional way, and shadowing effected by “hatching” in darker shades of the same color (rather

than in black or a contrasting hue). Only faintly modeled with transparent hatching, the facial features literally remain the ground of the portrait: flat in dimension and closest in color to the parchment base. Viewing the limning, therefore, involves a penetration in inverse order to the limning process. We must pass through the built-up, and thus essentially "outer," ornament to get at the inside plain face. Indeed, because the unshadowed facial features are barely represented, they rely for full expression on the encircling, three-dimensional artifice. Symbolizing that the "real" private self only exists *in* and *through* artifice is the playing card backing the vellum of the simple face: the portrait of the miniature is literally represented on the interface between private and public self, sincerity and game. Limners appear self-consciously to have chosen these cards: backing a 1572 Hilliard limning of Elizabeth, for instance, is the Queen of Hearts.<sup>26</sup> Unton played with the same card when he privately and "very seacretly" uncovered to Henry his limned "Mistress"—her majesty, the queen.

The outer layers of ornament of an Elizabethan limning, then, mirroring their architectural contemporary, provide the necessary passage to the inner, truthful self. Like the corridor of antechambers leading to the private room, moreover, they also hide the self they reveal. Certainly the delicacy of the built-up ornament conveys a sense of intimacy that reinforces the up-closeness of the simple face it frames. But such intimacy is "sweet" (imaging the sugar candy added to limning colors) and idealizes the sitter. We see not a "true" but a flattering image of the self. The true self remains hidden behind the "sweet" ornament that encircles it. In fact, Queen Elizabeth encouraged Hilliard's aesthetic precisely because it masked her real, aging features. The intimacies Hilliard limned are thus "covert emotions," the emotional equivalent to Sidney's ethical "*Idea*."<sup>27</sup> As if acknowledging this fact the Unknown Lady enigmatically smiles at us. Such a mysterious expression of the mouth, "depending on the sweep of the middle line, with the corners tucked up a little," effects a "tantalizing intimacy."<sup>28</sup> We catch a glimpse of the heart that in real life enlivens the plain white face—itsself shaped into a heart by the intricate ornament of the limning—but the full-bodied lady lies out of reach. She keeps her secret.

The enigmatic smile expressing fleeting intimacy became a Hilliard trademark by the late 1580s, and at the same time the artifice that shaped his sitter's faces increasingly pointed to the hiddenness of the self within. The various leaves, petals, and buds placed against a lady's bosom (exemplified in Elizabeth's *Armada* portrait) are early expressions of this ornamental self-reference. The flowers never reappear from one miniature to another: they are unique signs with "secret significance."<sup>29</sup> But the full flowering of this tendency occurred in the late 1580s when many of the miniatures showed a hand held over the heart (sometimes half concealed behind a cloak or shirt) and riddling mottos in the tradition of *imprese*. The pinnacle of Hilliard's growing art of secrecy, *Young Man Among Roses* (fig. 9), dated c. 1587–88, rewards close inspection. Though depicting the sitter in full-



length—and thus, argues Mercer, foreshadowing the decline of the private limning—the *Roses* miniature is only about five by three inches large and viewed “in hand near unto the eye” (87) quintessentially expresses Hilliard’s “representation” of sincerity through artifice, of simplicity through ornament, of secret self through self-display.<sup>30</sup>

The miniature portrays a love-sick courtier leaning elegantly against a tree within a rose briar, his cloak slung casually over his shoulder, his hand held over his heart. The lover’s white face, as always in a Hilliard miniature, gives only the hint of expression: an abstract feeling of sadness. Full meaning is represented through color and “the truth of the line.” The white of the lover’s attire and features (his face encircled by his ruff mirroring the little white roses) expresses his purity and truth. The black of the cloak and stripes of the doublet declares his constancy in love. But the color black as well as the tawny hinted in the doublet’s black stripes and buttons is also the color of melancholy. It is the color complement to the thorns on the sweet rose bush. This combination of true, constant, and yet “crossed” love is also represented by the pictorial line. The oval of the miniature is elongated to include the firm tree trunk—accentuated by the long form of the youth—which frequently in books of *imprese* represents constancy. The lover’s left white leg, ruler-straight, keeps his truth constant as well. But the right leg crosses over the left, as the lines of the doublet cross over his chest (underscored by the lover’s arm and raised thumb, which follow the cross of the lines), suggesting thwarted love. The motto, which curves in gold over the top of the lover’s curly hair, crossing at one point the curving rose briar, verbalizes in a single line of verse the depth of meaning conveyed by color and line. “Dat poenas laudata fides,” it laments: “Praised faith brings sufferings [or penalties].”<sup>31</sup> The miniature is gemlike in the way it knits every detail together into a most decorative composition. In doing so, it belies William Camden’s ruling that in devices the picture is “the body” and the motto “the soul.” The device that is Hilliard’s miniature is all body. The verbal inscription swirled in gold is as much external decoration as the ornamental little roses. Both point to the inner soul or heart of the lover, the *impresa*’s “secretes of the minde.”<sup>32</sup>

Though clearly a lyrical expression of the trials of true love, however, the exact meaning represented—the personal allusion of the motto and its accompanying picture—is mysterious. In fact, though the color and line represent the lover’s meaning, they also in the very process of representation hide the “true” love expressed. More exactly, what we again see in this miniature is an inner, personal truth concealed behind public layers or “rooms” of ornament. The outermost room is the flowery rose bush, which covers the tree and the lover’s attire. Adorned by the decorative flowers and leaves, the lover’s hose and cloak, in particular, take on the ornamental patterns often woven into fabrics at court. This impression is reinforced by the unrealistic way Hilliard has painted the roses: they are limned *onto* the fabric, imitative of the secret flowers so often

limned onto ladies' bosoms. Just as the flowery roses cover the lover's constant black cloak, moreover, the now ornamented cloak becomes a public room mostly covering or enclosing his pure white hand. The plain hand thus in turn becomes an ornamental room behind which lies the lover's "true" heart. Following the corridor of rooms leading to the innermost room of an Elizabethan house, each successive "room" leading here into the truthful heart becomes less public in that it becomes less ornamental: we pass through the highly decorative roses, to the simple but elegant cloak, through to the plain white hand indicating the truthful heart within. The viewer actually gets a "sense" of the lover's heartfelt emotion through the necessary process of penetrating visually the succession of public coverings. Lying behind each other or, put another way, layered *across* each other, the ornamented "rooms" convey the sense not only of the lover's constant truth but of his heartache, his *crossed* love. But the heart itself is as concealed as the lover's face is unexpressive, symbolizing his hiddenness from all viewers. Even the lover's lady and intimate friends, who may have had access to some of the miniature's personal meaning, would have been denied full comprehension by the public artifice expressing it.

Confirming that the lover's secret truth finds representation through ornament that by its very nature is a form of public display, the motto of the miniature derives from a political history: Lucan's *De bello civili*. The lines are spoken by the eunuch Pothinus, who counsels Pompey's death. The love-sick pose of the courtier is thus inset in a political context in which the lover becomes Pompey the Great, whose trust made him vulnerable to betrayal. This political context further widens with Strong's convincing argument that the youth is the earl of Essex imaging his flattering, secret love for the queen (Elizabeth's colors were black and white, and the eglantine—if the roses are eglantine—one of her symbols). What exactly the miniature would mean within this larger context remains unclear. It is difficult to read the motto as a prophecy of Essex's downfall, which lies some fourteen years in the future. And I do not think that, in accepting a veiled reference to Elizabeth, we need exclude an even more private love. Essex's secret marriage to Sidney's widow, we should note, also occurs about this time.<sup>33</sup> The point is that Hilliard and the courtier limned here would have felt as much at ease in picturing a private love through the common symbols of the queen as in expressing the private experience of love through a political motto. Such is the nature of the miniature.

Everything about the miniature, in sum, suggests secret self-expression through public "rooms" of self-display: decorative boxes enclose the private self of the miniature in the bedroom, or enameled gold lockets encase and carry it into court, and within, layers of ornamental colors and patterns cover and point to self-truth (whether suggested by a plain face or an inner, beating heart). The "rooms" of artifice of a Hilliard miniature, in fact, never finally open to reveal fully the self. The layers of self-revealing, self-concealing ornament extend indef-

initely, as is symbolized by the frequent limning of “miniatures-within-miniatures.” In *Man Against a Background of Flames* (fig. 10), dated c. 1595, for instance, a lover appears literally to bare his burning passion. His fine linen shirt, *en deshabillé*, opens wide to reveal his white breast and an enameled gold locket hanging from a chain around his neck. Pressed against his heart, the locket undoubtedly contains a miniature of his mistress. The lover is, observes Hotson, “chained to the Idea of his mistress,” and every decorative detail of the miniature tells his single passion: not only the other pieces of jewelry—the ring on the little finger, “the finger of lovers,” and the “pendant ear-drop in the form of a true-love”—but “the white of his shirt and the nakedness of his breast [which] both show his Sincerity or Truth.”<sup>34</sup> Most expressive of all is the flaming background, its surging rhythms growing out of the folds of the lover’s shirt. “I am a martyr burning at the stake of love,” declares the lover through the artifice of his miniature. But he also warns, “My love is secret.” The mistress lies locked within the ornamental case, just as the heart against which the locket is pressed beats concealed behind the white “ground” of the lover’s breast. Even if the locket were opened—as the lover’s breast is bared—it would, we have seen, continue to screen through its own ornament the truth of self within. The truth cannot by its nature be represented, and it must by the nature of the court world in which it resides find expression through public “rooms” of artifice and convention. Behind the ornamental jewel covering the white breast of the lover is not the heart of truth, the bared expression of sincerity, but yet another public expression of that heart: the playing card, the Ace of Hearts.<sup>35</sup>

### **“Publishing” the Sonnet:**

#### **“Such secret thoughts as fit not euery sight”**

Having traversed the long corridor of rooms that published the heart-felt emotion of Hilliard’s miniatures, we arrive almost inevitably at the “little poem” of love.<sup>36</sup>

Elizabethan love poetry, we find, was often “published” in the very same private rooms where the miniature was shown. When Cecil thus composed love lyrics to the queen in honor of her playing with his miniature, he had them sung to Elizabeth “in his chamber.” The pose and language of love poets, if not actual poems, also found expression in the private room. We hear that the French king, “verie seacretly” shown Unton’s limned “Mistress” in the royal bedchamber, “with Passion and Admiration” beheld it and “with great Reverence . . . kissed it twice or thrice.” He acts out a conventional image of the sonneteers: the lover worshipping his lady like a saint. As Unton concludes his story, love rhetoric dominates: “In the Ende, with some kind of Contention, he toke it from me, vowing, that I might take my Leave of it, for he would not forgoe it for any Treasure; and that, to possesse the Favor of the lively Picture, he would forsake all the

World, and hould himself most happie, with many other most passionate Wordes."<sup>37</sup> Henry's kisses and "passionate Wordes" startle with their artificiality, but also with their intimacy. They are intricately part of the very personal moment of Unton's unveiling. Such lyrical expressions of love conveyed to select "intimates" in private rooms can be contrasted with the more public form of drama, which would have been presented to a wide audience in an open room of a house, such as the Banquet Hall. Unlike "full-scale" dramatic action, love poetry takes miniaturized snapshots of a lover. Even an entire sonnet sequence, though it may have "structure" or "movements," lacks the strict narrative continuity of drama. The sonneteer endeavors rather to catch successively heartfelt and fresh glimpses of his love: in Spenser's words, "The sweet eye-glaunces, that like arrowes glide, / the charming smiles, that rob sence from the hart: / the louely pleasance and the lofty pride."<sup>38</sup> The love poet is a version of Hilliard's limner—necessarily "amorous" of his sitter, insists Hilliard—who strove to "catch those lovely graces, witty smilings, and those stolen glances which suddenly like lightning pass, and another countenance taketh place" (77). It follows naturally that the little sonnet manuscript, like the little vellum miniature, would be privately passed "in hand" between lovers and close friends. As Malcolm William Wallace observes, the showing of Sidney's love sonnets would have been even more intimate than of his romance, the *Arcadia*: "A special dear friend he should be that could have a sight, but much more dear that could once obtain a copy of it."<sup>39</sup>

Love poetry, then, was guardedly "published" between intimates in private rooms. It was also kept in the private room within ornamental cabinets or boxes. The locking of love poems within these containers usually reserved for one's greatest valuables belies the poets' reiterated apologies that their poems are mere "toys" or "youthful follies." J. C., the author of a six-line stanza sequence, *Alcilia* (1595), may assert: "Ah, if my thoughts had not been vain, it had been much the best / If all these things had buried been within my secret breast." Yet, as he himself conjectures of his lady to his "little book": "Thee in her secret box perchance securely she may hide." Thomas Nashe, justifying the piratical printing of Sidney's sonnets, argues that poetry is "oftentimes imprisoned in Ladyes casks" and must use "some priuate penne (in steed of a picklock) to procure his violent enlargement." So too, Sir William Alexander in *Aurora* (1604) affirms, "had not others otherwise aduised, / My cabinet should yet these scroles containe."<sup>40</sup> Did Alexander's "cabinet" also contain his miniatures? Most likely. The sonnet and the miniature probably lay side by side in the decorative little boxes and cabinets that concealed Elizabethan valuables.

In order to view the inner private love poem, therefore, one had to pass through the same succession of outer public "rooms"—the many antechambers as well as the ornamental boxes—that allowed access to, while also keeping secret, the miniature. In discussing the miniature, I argued the logical extension of this fact was the miniature's appearance at court, concealed within an ornamental

casing. The love poem also traveled out to court. Its smallness, even when collected in a sequence, permitted its easy portability into court as well as its secret handling. The minute lyric could be hidden in a lady's pocket, like Raleigh's love poem to Lady Laiton, or "thrust" into her bosom along with the love letter in *The Adventures of Master F. I.*<sup>41</sup> But the closest parallel to the increasing "publication" of the private miniature at court was the increasing actual publication of the love poem. The poet literally published his private love—carrying it not only to the court, but to the "common" public beyond—by enclosing his poems in a literary locket: the "case" of prefatory letters speaking the convention of "secrets bewraide."

In 1592, for instance, after the 1591 piratical publication of some of his sonnets together with Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*, Daniel issued an authorized edition of his *Delia* and in his dedication to the Countess of Pembroke explains:

Although I rather desired to keep in the priuate passions of my youth, from the multitude, as things vttered to my selfe, and consecrated to silence: yet seeing I was betraide by the indiscretion of a greedie Printer, and had some of my secrets bewraide to the world, vncorrected: doubting the like of the rest, I am forced to publish that which I neuer ment. . . . I am thrust out into the worlde, and . . . my vnboldned Muse, is forced to appeare so rawly in publike.

Daniel protests that he (and by association Sidney) has suffered a mental rape. The inner temple of his "priuate passions . . . consecrated to silence" has been invaded, and his "secrets" betrayed, "forced" naked—"rawly"—into the public eye. Again and again the prefaces to the printed editions of sonnets describe the publication as a betrayal to the "common" public of the poet's "secrets." In his preface to the Miscellany, *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowers* (1573), which contains a large number of formal sonnets by Gascoigne, "H. W." readily admits he violated the wishes of his "familiar friend Master G. T.," who "charged me, that I should use them onely for mine owne particuler commoditie." H. W. actually attaches the letter in which, sure enough, G. T.—writing that he sends his collection to "his very friend" in order "to participate the sight therof unto your former good will"—implores H. W. "that you will by no meanes make the same common: but after your owne recreation taken therein that you wil safely redeliver unto me the originall copie." He concludes the letter reaffirming this request: "And therefore I requier your secresie herein." William Percy's epistle to the reader prefacing his *Sonnets to the Fairest Coelia* (1594) tells a similar tale: "whereas I was fullie determined to haue concealed my Sonnets, as thinges priuie to my selfe, yet of courtesie hauing lent them to some, they were secretlie committed to the Presse, and almost finished, before it came to my knowledge." Robert Tofte's *Lavra* (1597) is framed fore and aft by declarations of this kind. Preceding this sequence is an "Epistle Dedicatorie" to Lady Lucie, "hoping your Ladiship wil keep them as priuately, as I send them vnto you most willingly." Then comes an epistle "To the

Reader" in which the printer confesses he and his friend "are both too blame, that whereas he hauing promised to keepe priuate the originall, and I the copie, secret: we both haue consented to send it abroad, as common." At the other end of the sequence, sealing these declarations of violated trust, is a note by another friend claiming he strove to protect the author's secret, "But I came at the last sheetes printing."<sup>42</sup>

Lest we too hastily conclude, "With such friends who needs enemies?" we should note that these many prefatory letters by and to "friends" in fact ensure the secrecy of the "priuate passions" they publish. The poet's claim that his love poetry is "priuate" and "secret," only meant for the eyes of dear friends, together with his declarations that "a greedie Printer" or those very same friends "betraide" him, creates for the reader the sense of a door opening onto the poet's most inner self. Yet the prefatory letters make it impossible to distinguish sincerity from artifice. In *Floures*, for instance, the Printer ("A. B.") accuses H. W. and G. T. of "politiquely" claiming secrecy to prevent "the daunger of misreport" and concludes, "Now I feare very muche (all these words notwithstanding) that these two gentlemen were of one assent compact to have it imprinted."<sup>43</sup> Yet following the Printer's statement is H. W.'s letter "to the Reader," which is in turn followed by G. T.'s letter "to his very friend H. W.," entreating "secresie." One begins to get the strong sense here and throughout the sonnet prefaces of an elaborate game being played. In this sense the sonnets really are "toys." To the extent that this game follows recognized rules, it is public, like the conventional artifice on the miniature case. G. T. (probably George Turberville) can thus speak "politiquely" in a way not meant by his printer: through the convention of the game of secrecy in publishing love poetry, he can write a letter claiming intimacy with a political superior, the earl of Oxford (H. G.), from whom he sought favor. To question Turberville's sincerity, however, is as problematic as to question Elizabeth's sincerity in secretly uncovering her "wrapt" miniatures to Melville. When Elizabeth along with other miniature owners hesitates to uncover her limnings, and when Turberville along with other love poets calls for the "secresie" of his collection, both adopt a conventional and artful pose. But their sincerity may very well have been genuine. We cannot know. Signposting the unreachability of the poet's truthful feelings are the secret inscriptions, such as Oxford's "Meritum petere, grave," together with the bare initials often signed to individual poems and whole sequences. The editor, H. W., writes about the printer, A. B., and the collector, G. T. The respective title pages to *Emaricdulfie* (1595), *Diella* (1596), and *Lavra* (1597) identify the poets as "E. C. Esquier," "R. L., Gentleman," and "R. T. Gentleman." Each provides but an outline that hints at, without fully disclosing, the private self represented within.<sup>44</sup>

The prefatory letters and signatures to sonnets form but the outermost "room" or "case" enclosing the poet's love. Within we find still more chambers of convention that extend the game of secrecy. Not only do the poets infuse their

sonnets with declarations of their “secret,” “hidden,” and “private” loves, but—vying with Hilliard’s secret mottos—they play with “riddles” about love and secretly publish the identity of themselves and, especially, of their mistresses. Repeatedly we encounter acronyms and anagrams on the lady’s name as well as special code words—Sidney’s reiterated “rich,” for example<sup>45</sup>—not to mention numerous other glances at her heraldic arms, country home, etc. These conventional “codes” are less public and more personal than the claims of “secrets bewraide” in the prefatory letters: they offer closer access to the poet’s “true” self and the “truth” of his love. One might say, then, that the Elizabethan poet publishing his sonnets, like the Elizabethan lover “publishing” his miniature, in a kind of game of secrecy builds up around his private love rooms of increasingly public “selves.” One’s intimacy with the poet, as with the miniature owner, determined how far one could pass within, and only the initiate could reach the inner sanctum.

But the inner sanctum is no more represented in sonnets than in miniatures. When one penetrates beyond the outer convention of sonnet secrecy—the title pages and prefaces—and beyond the conventional signposts of secrecy within the poems—the riddles and codes of love—one is left with the conventional artifice of rhetoric, the verbal mirror to Hilliard’s limning ornament. This is all there is. Sidney, more than any other Elizabethan sonneteer, vociferously denied and—ironically—epitomized this reality. In his effort to represent “true,” heartfelt love, Sidney adamantly rejected conventional “sugared” rhetoric, just as he refused publicly to publish his sonnets. Yet in the very process of rejecting ornament, Sidney invented “in a ground of so firme making” (song 11, line 34) a verbal artifice of secrecy complementary to Hilliard’s visual art. Hereby he would both “publish” his very private love and keep it “close” (34).

### Sidney’s “Ground” of Poetry

In a typical rejection of surface ornament as a foolish “toy,” Sidney in sonnet 11 of *Astrophil and Stella* compares Cupid’s “boyish . . . Playing” with Stella’s “outward part” to a child’s looking only at the “coloured” decoration in “some faire booke”:

In truth, ô Love, with what a boyish kind  
 Thou doest proceed in thy most serious wayes:  
 That when the heav’n to thee his best displays,  
 Yet of that best thou leav’st the best behind.  
 For like a child that some faire booke doth find,  
 With guiled leaves or coloured Velume plays,  
 Or at the most on some fine picture staves,  
 But never heeds the fruit of writer’s mind:  
 So when thou saw’st in Nature’s cabinet  
*Stella*, thou straight lookst babies in her eyes,

In her cheek's pit thou didst thy pitfould set,  
And in her breast bopeepe or couching lyes,  
Playing and shining in each outward part:  
But, foole, seekst not to get into her hart.

The illuminated manuscript with "gilded leaves" and "coloured Velume" is the father of the miniature. Indeed, Sidney's specific analogy of the child staying "on some fine picture" to Cupid settling on Stella's face and breast recalls the small portrait limnings that began appearing on manuscripts just before the miniature gained independence. Hilliard illuminated two such portraits between 1581 and 1583 for Elizabeth's now lost prayer book. The portraits are of Elizabeth and her suitor, Duke d'Alençon, and appear, respectively, at the back and front of the book. They thus frame the text in the same way more traditional illuminations (such as flowers, beasts, heraldic symbols, and biblical scenes) frame the individual pages of manuscripts. Since Sidney was also involved in the Alençon marriage negotiations, he may have seen Elizabeth's prayer-book limnings.<sup>46</sup> In any case, he also pictures ornamental illuminations framing—with the added negative judgment they are peripheral to—the heart of the text, "the fruit of writer's mind." The reference in line 9 to "Nature's cabinet" further suggests by analogy that "the fruit of writer's mind" resides within a man-made cabinet: one of the lavishly decorated cabinets enclosing Elizabethan miniatures, sonnet manuscripts, and other valuables. "In truth," layers of ornament—first the decorative cabinet, then the "coloured" illuminations—encase the "serious" inner text. Similarly, "Nature's cabinet" encloses each beautiful "outward part" of Stella, all of which, in turn, encases her innermost being, "her hart." The comparison does not invoke a contrast between man's and "Nature's" cabinets, between the artificial and the natural, so much as a parallel movement inward through outer decorative enclosures. In order to heed "the fruit of writer's mind," one must penetrate cabinet and illuminations; in order to "get *into*" Stella's "hart," one must penetrate cabinet and each "shining . . . outward part."

What, however, is in Stella's "hart"? What, for that matter, does Sidney mean by "the fruit of writer's mind"? The ideas of the writer? the words? The inner cores of the manuscript and Stella are not represented, despite the poet's assurance that "heav'n," and by implication the writer, "his best displayes." One gets at Stella's "hart" and "the fruit of writer's mind" through the encasing ornament, which gestures toward them in the very process of itself being dismissed. But the "best," "serious" inner truths of this sonnet remain concealed. The playful "outward" ornament is all we really see.

In many other sonnets, the poet does zoom in on the inner truth of "the fruit of writer's mind"—in the sense of "rhetoric"—contained within the outer layers of ornament. Yet what he reveals in focusing on verbal expression is but



more layers of ornamental display that continue the game of only gesturing toward the "true" self. Sonnet 3 exemplifies this verbal encircling:

Let daintie wits crie on the Sisters nine,  
That bravely maskt, their fancies may be told:  
Or *Pindare's* Apes, flaunt they in phrases fine,  
Enam'ling with pied flowers their thoughts of gold:  
Or else let them in statelier glorie shine,  
Ennobling new found Tropes with problemes old:  
Or with strange similies enrich each line,  
Of herbes or beastes, which *Inde* or *Afrike* hold.  
For me in sooth, no Muse but one I know:  
Phrases and Problemes from my reach do grow,  
And strange things cost too deare for my poore sprites.  
How then? even thus: in *Stella's* face I reed,  
What Love and Beautie be, then all my deed  
But Copying is, what in her Nature writes.

"Sidney here," William A. Ringler, Jr., aptly observes, "reviews the chief literary movements of his time, both on the Continent and in England."<sup>47</sup> At the same time, I propose, he bespeaks the social and aesthetic passageways of the Elizabethan miniature: progressing from the court where the miniature was worn, to the miniature case that enclosed it, to the miniature itself.

The first two lines succinctly declare the need at court (in the process of rejecting this need, of course) for hidden self-expression through ornament: "Let daintie wits crie on the Sisters nine, / That bravely maskt, their fancies may be told." Like gentlemen attending upon a court of artifice, "daintie wits" can only tell, can only "publish," their private "fancies" when they are "bravely maskt": that is, when they are displayed in a "fine" or "splendid" garb that is at the same time a disguise.<sup>48</sup>

In considering the miniature, we noticed that "daintie" courtiers "bravely maskt" the private "fancies" of their limnings by enclosing them in richly enameled gold lockets. So too, "*Pindare's* Apes, flaunt they in phrases fine, / Enam'ling with pied flowers their thoughts of gold." We have here a verbal rendering of the back of the *Gresley Jewel*—gold enameled with pied flowers. Sidney possibly saw this case, since it was given to the cousin of his close friend and future father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham. Whether he had this specific locket in mind or not, Sidney pictures the enameled gold "thoughts" of "*Pindare's* Apes," like the enameled gold case of the miniature, serving both to "flaunt" and to "mask." Put another way, as in lines 5 and 6, the ornamental coverings of verbal and pictorial artifice are "problemes old" draping "new found Tropes": they project identity, "Ennobling" the self "in statelier glorie," and yet also confound, make "problematic," self-truth.

Not only Elizabethan miniature cases, however, but also the miniatures themselves were sprinkled with "gold" and painted with "pied flowers" in lustrous colors resembling "Enam'ling." Strong firmly establishes the link between the art of "*Pindare's Apes*" and Hilliard's limnings. Tracing the sources for the *Roses* youth painted over as if enameled with decorative flowers, Strong arrives in France at "highly stylized erotic paintings" of the Valois court: "*Triumph of Flora* epitomizes this world of sinuous elegance and courtly preciosity which, in its turn, in the scattering of flowers across the picture's surface, reflects directly the poetry of Ronsard and the *Pléiade*." "Ronsard and the *Pléiade*," Ringler points out, are what Sidney means by "*Pindare's Apes*."<sup>49</sup> Sidney's "*Pindare's Apes*," Ronsard's *Pléiade*, and Hilliard's youth all enamel "with pied flowers their thoughts of gold." In fact, the ornamental "flowers" of Ronsard's rhetoric appear in "each line" of Hilliard's miniatures because, as we have seen, despite Hilliard's claim to "the truth of the line," his brushstrokes form decorative patterns. Furthermore, his unmixed, "truthful" colors were often culled from rich and exotic sources. Hilliard's limnings, one could say, "with strange similies enrich each line, / Of herbes or beastes, which *Inde* or *Afrike* hold." The blue colors, "florey" and "indigo," for example, were made from the leaves of the Indian plant, *Indigofera*. From "strange" Indian beasts came the red "India Lake," made from "the females, eggs and the exudation surrounding them, of the insect *Coccus lacca*." Africa's beast, the elephant, contributed most of the ivory, which Hilliard insists makes the best "velvet black" (91), and which also—in the form of turned ivory boxes—encased miniatures kept in cabinets. While the miniaturist made his colors from "herbes or beastes" gathered literally from all over the world, "*Inde*" and "*Afrike*" were major providers.<sup>50</sup>

One cannot, of course, too strictly enforce this analogy between the world of sonnet rhetoric and the world of limning. A lot of Elizabethan jewelry, for instance, not just the "fyne jewell" of the miniature and its case, consists of gold enameled "with pied flowers." Nevertheless, Sidney in these first eight lines repeatedly evokes ornamental casings like the encasing layers of artifice around the miniature. Each example depicts something clothed or "wrap't" in ornament: "fancies" are "bravely maskt," "thoughts" are enameled, "new found Tropes" are ennobled "with problemes old," "each line" is enriched "with strange similies." If our first impression, however, is of naked, simple bodies clothed in artifice, the language belies this. "Each line" is neutral, unrepresentational. "New found Tropes" are themselves rhetorical figures. And most significantly, the "thoughts" of line 4 are not clothed in gold enameled "with pied flowers"; rather, the thoughts themselves are "of gold." Ornament enamels ornament. Even "fancies," while suggestive of inner, private forces, evokes also the rich court world where an aristocrat can afford to indulge his whims.

In an effort to break through this Chinese box of ornament, the poet in line 9 turns away from public artifice to private truth. "For me in sooth," he declares—"For myself, in truth." I am but a simple man who knows only one Muse, who

cannot attain "Phrases and Problemes" nor pay the high cost of rich ornament: "strange things cost too deare for my poore sprites." Here we should note the great expense of miniatures and their cases, which would also be "too deare" for Sidney in his financial straits (although that would not stop him from buying them).<sup>51</sup> How then can he express his personal, truthful feelings? "How then? even thus: in *Stella's* face I reed, / What Love and Beautie be, then all my deed / But Copying is, what in her Nature writes." Seeking truthful self-expression, Sidney turns *into* Stella's face—"in *Stella's* face I reed"—"in" which "Nature writes." In this sonnet, more typical than sonnet 11, the poet specifically turns from the artificial to the natural as well as from the public to the private. But here again he can only look into the private, truthful, and natural expression of his love written "in" Stella's face by looking through the public layers of ornament enumerated in the first eight lines. Reading the sonnet thus duplicates the process of viewing a miniature: the passage inward through the artifice of the miniature case to the sincere self represented within. Or, since we saw that the limning within is itself ornamental, it duplicates the penetration through the layers of artifice in the actual limning that cover and lead to the "sense" of a true inner self. In this sense, Sidney's sonnet verbally pictures Hilliard's *Unknown Lady* whose stylized ornament encircles and points to the "ground" of the lady's face within.

Sidney gestures toward his own lady's face not only through the artifice of others but through his own elaboration of love rhetoric. The parallel with Hilliard is here striking. Sidney writing "In truth" echoes Hilliard's claim to "the truth of the line" that signifies one's purity of soul. In fact, both Sidney and Hilliard saw themselves as artists of sincere and natural self-representation: Hilliard painting in pure colors not "smutted" with shadowing; Sidney painting "in blacke and white" (70) not masked with rhetorical "colores." Sidney even pictures Stella in the stance of Queen Elizabeth in Hilliard's story, standing without "fanne's wel-shading grace" in the direct light of the sun "which open shone" (22). Yet both poet and limner experimented extensively in the "artifice"—in its dual sense of ornament and concealment—of their respective arts.

William Cherubini's recent quantitative analysis of *Astrophil and Stella* confirms C. S. Lewis's nomen of "golden verse": shaping Sidney's "truthful" lines is syntax "extremely rich in its variety of patterns," as well as the multiple tropes and schemes conventional to love poetry.<sup>52</sup> A characteristic Sidney scheme, *epanaphora*<sup>53</sup>—evident in sonnet 3 in the repetition of "Or" at the beginning of lines 3, 5, and 7—especially effects a stylized, ornamental speech. It creates a weaving pattern like that of the ruff and curls encircling the face of Hilliard's lady. At the other end of these lines, closing the frame of "the fruit of writer's mind," is the patterned rhyme that distinguishes Sidney's fourteen-line sonnets from his predecessors' more generic "little poems" of love.<sup>54</sup> Throughout his unflagging experiments in the form, Sidney consistently advanced the sonnet's compressed and intricate rhyme, thus reinforcing the effect of a decorative poetic

weave. Furthermore, the “colores rhetorici” of his “blacke and white” print, though moving into melancholy hues in the later sonnets, imitate the fresh colors of Hilliard’s limning that find their source in “choisest flowers” (55) and rare “gemmes” (81): the poet limns his love in “Lillies” and “Roses” (100), in “Ivorie, Rubies, pearle and gold” (32). Sidney’s verse, in sum, may gesture toward plain speech, and even capture a sense of it in the concluding lines—“But, foole, seekst not to get into her hart” (11)—but his poetry is built up of “sweet” and “sugared” phrases (to borrow two of the poet’s favorite epithets) that perfectly complement the “rich” lady they address. The poet’s heartfelt love, along with the full-featured Stella, lies grounded within his own as well as others’ “rich” artifice.

Most typically, as we have seen in sonnets 3 and 11, the poet suggests his sincere inner love by actually turning inward through ornament in the last line or lines of the sonnet: “*in Stella’s face*” (line 12), “*into her hart*” (line 14). Thrusting inward effects “that same forcibleness, or *Energia*,” which, declares Sidney in the *Apologie*, convinces ladies “that in truth they [their lovers] feele those passions.”<sup>55</sup> When not turning inward through artifice to the “truthful” representation of Stella’s features—her “face,” “hart,” “eyes,” etc.—Sidney tries to effect sincerity of expression by turning to the verbal equivalent of Hilliard’s single, pure brushstroke: the single word. Stella’s name, in particular, becomes almost a code word in the sonnets for the poet’s true love. In sonnet 55, for instance, we typically proceed through a preoccupation with “choisest” rhetorical “flowers,” but instead of turning to Stella’s “hart” or “face” we turn to her “name”: “For let me but name her whom I do love, / So sweete sounds straight mine eare and heart do hit, / That I well find no eloquence like it.” That the poet cannot, in fact, bring himself to name Stella’s name in the concluding lines of this sonnet underscores the sense in which the poet’s thrust through “sugring” to “true but naked shew” (55) is as much a concealing as a revealing gesture. Nevertheless the poet does in the sequence “incessantly” (55) cry out Stella’s name. So frequently does the word “Stella” appear that it becomes the verbal ground of the sonnets, complementing the visual ground of Stella’s face. Indeed, since her face is repeatedly compared to a “text” (67) written with “faire lines” (71), there is a sense in which the gestures inward to Stella’s face and to her name are essentially the same. The poet indicates the ground of his love through other single words as well. Sonnet 35, for instance, concludes by turning to the word “praise”: “Not thou by praise, but praise in thee is raise: / It is a praise to praise, when thou art praisde.” One gets the feeling the poet is trying verbally to body forth the truth of his love by repeating over and over again the single, truthful word. He fails, of course. Sidney’s reiterated word no more “represents” a sincere inner self than do Hilliard’s repeated brushstrokes. On the contrary, the playful repetition of “praise” artificially patterns the poet’s love so as to obscure the very sincerity it seeks to express. It forms a kind of ornamental cover, and the ambiguity effected by the

repetition of “praise”—“flattery?” or “just reward?”—adds depth to the hiddenness of the poet’s “true” meaning. Even the single word “Stella” is but another rhetorical “flower” concealing “star” beneath its surface denotation.<sup>56</sup>

The impenetrability of such verbal layering or encasing of the poet’s “true” love is underscored by Sidney’s inventive use of the “poem-within-a-poem.” This verbal complement to Hilliard’s “limning-within-a-limning,” which we saw in the *Flames* miniature, is well illustrated in sonnet 80:<sup>57</sup>

Sweet swelling lip, well maist thou swell in pride,  
 Since best wits thinke it wit thee to admire;  
 Nature’s praise, Vertue’s stall, *Cupid’s* cold fire,  
 Whence words, not words, but heav’nly graces slide.  
 The new *Pernassus*, where the Muses bide,  
 Sweetner of musicke, wisdom’s beautifier:  
 Breather of life, and fastner of desire,  
 Where Beautie’s blush in Honour’s graine is dide.  
 Thus much my heart compeld my mouth to say,  
 But now spite of my heart my mouth will stay,  
 Loathing all lies, doubting this Flatterie is:  
 And no spurre can his resty race renew,  
 Without how farre this praise is short of you,  
 Sweet lip, you teach my mouth with one sweet kisse.

The sonnet begins with a characteristic flourish of conventional rhetorical ornament in which one “sweet” metaphor is piled upon another. On passing through this built-up decorative praise, we come upon a different voice in the sestet, which comments upon the octave as if it were a separate poem-within-the-poem. The sestet throws into relief the artifice of the octave, suspecting it to be mere surface ornament—mere “Flatterie”—and presents itself instead as the ground of plain speaking. But we no more uncover the poet’s “true” inner self here than when we penetrate visually the built-up ornament of the *Flames* miniature to view the white ground of the lover’s bared breast. The limned lover, we recall, exposes not his “heart” but an ornamental miniature case that hides his love. Similarly, the poet here progresses through artifice to sincerity only to reveal in the concluding line but another “case” of conventional and flattering praise: “Sweet lip, you teach my mouth with one sweet kisse.” That the elaborate praise of the first eight lines is literally spoken from the “heart” indicates the absolute reliance of heartfelt love on artifice for expression. In the Elizabethan court, which forms the backdrop for *Astrophil and Stella*, “truth it selfe must speake like flatterie” (35). It is in fact the “mouth,” not the “heart,” which makes the gesture through artifice toward the kind of sincere, plain speaking one associates with the “heart.” The “heart” itself remains essentially hidden.

Again and again in *Astrophil and Stella*, then, we proceed through public “casings” of conventional rhetorical display toward a private and sincere vision

of love that is never attained. The outer layers need not be solely rhetorical. They may also, as in sonnet 30, be political:

Whether the Turkish new-moone minded be  
To fill his hornes this yeare on Christian coast;  
How *Poles'* right king meanes, without leave of hoast,  
To warme with ill-made fire cold *Moscovy*;  
If French can yet three parts in one agree;  
What now the Dutch in their full diets boast;  
How *Holland* hearts, now so good townes be lost,  
Trust in the shade of pleasing *Orange* tree;  
How *Ulster* likes of that same golden bit,  
Wherewith my father once make it halfe tame;  
If in the Scottishe Court be weltring yet;  
These questions busie wits to me do frame;  
I, cumbred with good maners, answer do,  
But know not how, for still I thinke of you.

This sonnet well supports Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass's claim that the poet's "supposedly 'private' sphere of love can be imagined only through its similarities and dissimilarities to the public world of the court."<sup>58</sup> In fact, to revive our architectural metaphor, the poet, like the courtier seeking private audience with the queen, can only attain private thoughts of his love by passing through a series of outer political "rooms." He must pass through the politics of far-away Turkey, through news of the nearer lands of Poland, France, Germany, and Holland, through the affairs of England's own Ireland, through the events of bordering Scotland—all the time nearing closer and closer to his homeland—before he can finally turn inward in the last lines to focus on his private love: "for still I thinke of you." The sense of inwardness in the sonnet is actually created for the most part by the passage through these geographical outer "rooms" of politics. The poet's declaration itself—"for still I thinke of you"—offers little. Politics, in effect, along with conventional rhetoric, provides a "publike" "High-way" leading "safeliest" to the poet's "heart" (84). The rhetoric of Sidney's sonnets can thus express his "Great expectation" (21) for favor simultaneously from his personal lady, Stella, and from his political lady, the queen. It is a testament to the essentially political nature of Sidney's rhetoric that he uses a high number of "tropes of state" in his "representation" of his private love: he limns his lady in the queen's images—"Ermine" (86) and "Roses" (102), for example—as well as in her titles of "Majestie" (48), "soveraigne" (song 8, line 29), "Princesse," and "Queene" (107).<sup>59</sup>

To the extent this conventional and political rhetoric not only maps but also encodes the poet's private love—his "secretēs of the minde"—we might adopt the nomen of the 1591 *Astrophil and Stella* and call the sonnets "devices."<sup>60</sup>

Sidney, we know, enthusiastically exhibited devices at court tournaments, and

invented a number of *impreses* with stars suggestive of “Stella.” Perhaps the most fitting device for Sidney’s representation of his love in the sonnets is the *impresa* he displayed in the tilt-yard after being disappointed of his inheritance by the birth of a son to his uncle, Leicester. The *impresa* stated simply “SPERAVI.”<sup>61</sup> Combining the “word” and “picture” of the device into a single image, this *impresa* encapsulates the sense of a layered self: Sidney’s disappointment takes the form of hope crossed out. A limning analogue can be found in Hilliard’s *Roses* motto of “crossed love” complementing the visual layering in the limning of the lover’s true self. Sonnet 50 in *Astrophil and Stella* also images the layered, half-revealing, half-concealing device:

Stella, the fulnesse of my thoughts of thee  
 Cannot be staid within my panting breast,  
 But they do swell and struggle forth of me,  
 Till that in words thy figure be exprest.  
 And yet as soone as they so formed be,  
 According to my Lord Love’s owne behest:  
 With sad eyes I their weake proportion see,  
 To portrait that which in this world is best.  
 So that I cannot chuse but write my mind,  
 And cannot chuse but put out what I write,  
 While those poore babes their death in birth do find:  
 And now my pen these lines had dashed quite,  
 But that they stopt his furie from the same,  
 Because their forefront bare sweet Stella’s name.

Like Sidney’s *impresa*, the above sonnet combines verbal and pictorial image. The lover is both painting a “portrait” and writing a text of Stella’s “figure.” And, as in “SPERAVI,” the poet has both displayed and crossed out his love: “I cannot chuse but write my mind, / And cannot chuse but put out what I write.” The different poetic voice of lines 12–14, which converts the preceding lines into another poem-within-a-poem, reinforces the sense of one self-image (of the lady and of the poet) standing behind or within another. Though the newly uncovered poet looking back on the “forefront” of his poem stops his pen from erasing it entirely, his writing in a sense continues simultaneously to be “put out”—“dashed” but not “quite.” We can still read the writing but it has been crossed through in the sense that we never see a representation of Stella. All we see is the “forefront” of the traditional lament that the poet cannot adequately “portrait” his love and the conventional claim that his love’s name is “sweet.” It is, in fact, these lines that dash out the real-life image of Stella, which can only be glimpsed behind and through them.

Even the lovers cannot fully penetrate the surface “faire lines” (71) that “write” and also “put out” (50) the inner self they write. That the artifice of secrecy keeps hidden the private self even from the most intimate especially holds true

for Sidney's sonnets where, as Clark Hulse argues, both Astrophil and Stella play the game of competing for power through language.<sup>62</sup> The lovers are readers of each other whom they at the same time write. And because they can only express their private love through public or conventional conceits and poses, they each become "wrapt" in a fictional case. The resulting difficulties of reading each other—even perhaps of fathoming their own innermost thoughts—explains how the poet's thrust inward at the end of the sonnets can sometimes appear ironic, conniving, or self-deluding. It also explains the poet's preoccupation toward the end of the sequence with another version of love crossed out: Stella's "absence" or, more accurately, her "ABSENT presence" (106). The "real" Stella has been "absent" all along.<sup>63</sup> A striking parallel appears in our architectural model. Henry VIII, we find, was commonly served dinner amidst all the traditional ceremony in the royal Presence Chamber. Elizabeth, however, who had multiplied the number of royal rooms, increasingly withdrew further inward and ate in the Privy Chamber. But all the ceremony of serving the queen continued to be performed in the Presence Chamber, even though the queen herself was not *present*: "Sayes were taken, wine and beer were poured, three courses and a dessert were served, all with full ceremony to an imaginary queen at an empty table. At the end of each serving a portion of the food or drink was taken up and carried through to the actual queen next door."<sup>64</sup> This vision of conventional display that served the queen in private and unseen is a perfect analogue for the rhetorical and political conventions of Sidney's sonnets that serve and hide behind their own "presence" chamber the poet's "ABSENT" private love.

But perhaps we should rethink our metaphor. We have so far described "ABSENT presence" in *Astrophil and Stella* in terms of a movement *inward* through public "rooms" of artifice. But one could also describe the process as a turning outward. On the one hand, the poet's passage *through* artifice, as well as his repetition in the final lines of sonnets of the words "in" and "into," effects the impression of penetration. On the other hand, the very fact that the turn occurs in the final lines creates the impression of thrusting outward beyond the sonnets. The effect is ultimately the same, however. In both senses the poet gestures beyond the sonnets since he points beyond the written words. And in both senses he gestures inward, since what lies beyond is also what lies within: the white parchment upon which the sonnets are written. This is the true "ground" of Sidney's love. Here, in the blank of the pages, the truth of the word and Stella's face lie hidden. Significantly, Sidney himself likens Stella's face to white parchment in sonnet 102: "It is but love, which makes his paper perfit white / To write therein more fresh the story of delight." Each successive sonnet in *Astrophil and Stella* writes "fresh" the poet's love. Each sonnet *re*-presents the gesture inward through artifice to sincere self-representation that necessarily can never *present* the self. Taken together, the successive sonnets in the sequence themselves form



an ornamental pattern encircling and pointing to the "space," the white parchment, that is the ground of the poet's love.<sup>65</sup>

In a special sense, to conclude, Sidney follows Gascoigne's advice to poets: "The first and most necessarie poynt that euer I founde meete to be considered in making of a delectable poeme is this, *to grounde it upon some fine inuention. . . . some good and fine deuise*" (my emphasis).<sup>66</sup> Sidney's sonnet devices are indeed grounded upon a "fine inuention." But invention is never visible except *in* convention. Sidney's famous first sonnet, which specifically addresses the problem of "Invention," sets the pattern for the entire sequence:

Loving in truth, and faine in verse my love to show,  
That the deare She might take some pleasure of my paine:  
Pleasure might cause her reade, reading might make her know,  
Knowledge might pitie winne, and pitie grace obtaine,  
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,  
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertaine:  
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow  
Some fresh and fruitfull showers upon my sunne-burn'd braine.  
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's stay,  
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Studie's blowes,  
And others' feete still seem'd but strangers in my way.  
Thus great with child to speake, and hellesse in my throwes,  
Biting my trewand pen, beating my selfe for spite,  
'Foole,' said my Muse to me, 'looke in thy heart and write.'

Sidney here, as throughout the sequence, seeks "to paint" his love "in truth": both truly to limn and to limn the truth of his personal love. And, as he does throughout the sequence, he finds the "way" to "Invention, Nature's child" through conventional artifice: through the "inventions fine" of "others' leaves" that constitute the corpus of love poetry. Only by considering commonly used "fine" "inventions" can the poet make the turn inward in the last line of the sonnet toward the kind of plain speech and sincere emotion that belong "in" his own "heart." Only through con-vention can he find in-vention. The "heart," the poet's heartfelt emotion, itself cannot directly speak, proved by the fact that the poet's conventional "Muse" speaks in the final line for him. The "heart" "in truth" exists more in "Idea" than actuality, like the generic "She" that stands for the real-life Stella. It lies beyond the last line of the sonnet, or rather beneath the sonnet convention, hidden in the white "ground" of the page. In this "ground of so firme making" (song 11, line 34), the poet finds Gascoigne's "good and fine deuise" in the heraldic as well as the poetic sense: he invents a poetic device that conveys the *impresa's* "secretetes of the minde."

Sidney's sonnets thus perfectly complement the visual device of Hilliard's limnings. Though Sidney wrote *Astrophil and Stella* in 1581–82, a few years before

Hilliard's secret art peaked, both poet and limner clearly responded to the same concern for representing at court the inner, private self, and despite Sidney's rejection of Hilliardesque ornament, both solved the problem in a similar way: an artifice of secrecy. To what extent Sidney was directly influenced by Hilliard is more difficult to determine. I have suggested Sidney saw the *Gresley Jewel*, and he probably also saw Greville's miniature of Elizabeth that Don John "perused . . . very carefully a good long time."<sup>67</sup> But Sidney's opportunity to view limnings by Hilliard would have been great. Hilliard's appearance on the limning scene in the early 1570s brought him almost instant fame, ushering in a miniature craze that increased in intensity with every year of Elizabeth's reign. Everyone who was anyone at court was limned by Hilliard, including Elizabeth, Drake, Leicester, Raleigh, Essex, and Sidney's very own Stella, Penelope Rich. Sidney's uncle, Leicester, and friend, Essex, were both patrons of Hilliard,<sup>68</sup> and through them Sidney may have met Hilliard. Or he may have met him during their joint participation in the Alençon marriage negotiations. That they did meet is certain: Hilliard in his *Treatise* reports a long conversation with Sidney (83–85). Considering their different social status, this exchange probably occurred at a sitting for a miniature, although no authentic limning of Sidney has yet been found. The *Arcadia*, specifically the tournament held by Phalantus in book 1, provides final confirmation of Sidney's familiarity and sympathy with miniatures. Phalantus, we recall, opens the tournament by parading portraits of ladies in large-scale—each picture held by two footmen—that he has won in jousts. The disguised heroes, Musidorus and Pyrocles, whose sudden arrival brings the tournament to a climax, display their loves in notably different fashions. Though Musidorus indeed sports a picture of Pamela, the picture is not in full-scale but "in litle form." It is a miniature. And the miniature is not openly displayed by servants but "covered with silk" and "fastened . . . to his helmet."<sup>69</sup> Unlike Phalantus, then, but very much like the Elizabethan courtiers who wore miniatures in rich cases around their necks, Musidorus publishes his love for Pamela and at the same time keeps it secret. He is the ideal companion of Pyrocles, who tells Phalantus that the "liveliest picture" of his love (Philoclea) "if you could see it, is in my heart."<sup>70</sup> The "wrapt" miniature of Musidorus is the outward representation of the inward portrait of Pyrocles hidden in his heart.

**After Hilliard and Sidney:  
"Within the loue-limn'd tablet of mine heart"**

While the necessarily limited scope of this paper precludes thorough investigation into the heritage left by Hilliard and Sidney, I should like to sketch certain ramifications and transformations of what I have dubbed their artifice of secrecy.<sup>71</sup>

That the publication of Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* in 1591 greatly influenced—indeed, triggered—the sonnet craze of the 1590s is undisputed. The coincident enthusiasm in painting for miniatures, however, suggests the time was ripe for just such a literary movement. The sonnet along with the miniature “came into being,” in J. W. Lever’s words, “because a new, personal attitude to experience demanded expression.”<sup>72</sup> The sonnet along with the miniature, I have argued, filled this demand in terms of another need for artifice. The conventional rhetoric of Sidney’s followers, imitating Sidney himself, verbalizes the ornament of Hilliard’s miniatures that points to heartfelt love. Limning their “true,” private loves in patterned lines and “lyvely collors,” with metaphorical flowers and gems, the sonneteers, one might say, are miniaturists at heart. Not surprisingly, therefore, Sir Arthur Gorges in *Vanytyes* (mostly composed c. 1584) specifically calls on Hilliard to paint his mistress. With seeming knowledge of Hilliard’s style, Gorges asks the limner to view heavenly “patterns” and “For lyvely collors reape the fresshest flowers / that in Elisab blessed fyeldes doo growe.” Henry Constable in the Todd manuscript version of *Diana* (c. 1590) praises Hilliard’s limning of no other than Sidney’s own sonnet heroine, Lady Rich. Of course, the poet claims his mistress taught Hilliard the art of giving “to diamonds rubies pearles the worth of which / Doth make the iewell which you paynt seeme rich.”<sup>73</sup>

Most strikingly, the sonneteers of the 1590s literally speak the language of limning. Again and again they use the technical term of the miniaturist—“limn”—instead of the more general “paint” to describe their verbal portraits of their loves. When Daniel presents to his lady a sonnet portrait in “collours,” in token of his love, he is simultaneously giving her a miniature: “Then take this picture which I heere present thee, / Limned with a Pensill not all vnworthy.” (“Pensill”—a small, fine brush for delicate painting [*OED*—also belongs to limning.) The *Zepheria* (1594) poet, seemingly aware that the “richer” miniature gestures to the “heart” but projects only an “*Idea*” of inner love, assures,

Yet that deuine *Idea* of thy grace,  
The life-immagerie of thy loues sweet souenance  
Within mine heart shall raigne in soueraigne place:  
Nay shall it euer pourtray other semblance?  
No neuer shall that face so fayre depaynted  
Within the loue-limn’d tablet of mine hart  
Emblemisht be, defaced or vnsaynted,  
Till death shall blot it with his pencill dart:  
Yet then in these limn’d lines enobled more,  
Thou shalt suruiue richer accomlisht then before.

Tofte’s “faire and bright” limning of his love in *Alba* (1598) also lies “hidden” “in midst of Hart”:

For though in darke she hidden doth appeere,  
 Yet vnto me she faire and bright doth show,  
 My Hart's the Boord, where limnde you may her see;  
 My Teares the Oyle, my Blood the Colours bee.

Drayton, perhaps with Sidney specifically in mind, limns his love in the white "ground" of the page—"In this fayre limmed ground as white as snow"—and appropriately invokes limning not painting in his exordium to "SWEET secrecie": "SWEET secrecie, what tongue can tell thy worth? / What mortall pen sufficiently can prayse thee? / What curious Pensill serves to lim thee forth?"<sup>74</sup>

But when Drayton sat for his own miniature portrait, the limner he chose belonged to the school of Isaac Oliver, not Hilliard. Drayton's choice here is important: it marks a new movement in both limning and sonneteering. Oliver, who seconded Hilliard in popularity in the 1590s and outstripped him after Elizabeth's death, increasingly in his limning rejected the decorativeness of Hilliard's bright colors and patterned lines for the naturalism of muted hues and dark modeling. Whereas Hilliard's faces are white and flat, Oliver's are shadowed and rounded. They have more depth. They are more fully represented. Compare, for instance, Hilliard's *Unknown Youth* (fig. 11) with the copy attributed to Oliver (fig. 12), both limned around 1588.<sup>75</sup> In that the individual is more fully figured forth in the latter, one can see this new style of representation as more private. Certainly the Oliver miniature, following the Hilliard limning, was associated with the private, even secret, self. Lord Herbert of Cherbury relates an incident around 1600 occurring in Lady Ayres's "chamber" that vividly conveys the privacy of the miniature, here a miniature by Oliver:

Coming one day into her chamber, I saw her through the curtains lying upon her bed with a wax candle in one hand, and the picture I formerly mentioned in the other. I coming thereupon somewhat boldly to her, she blew out the candle, and hid the picture from me; myself thereupon being curious to know what that was she held in her hand, got the candle to be lighted again, by means whereof I found it was my picture she looked upon with more earnestness and passion than I could have easily believed.<sup>76</sup>

If the Oliver miniature was passionately private, however, one can also see its psychological realism as less private. The more fully one is limned the more fully one's privacy is publicized. The private self revealed in depth is revealed nonetheless. It is telling, in this sense, that Oliver's miniature of Herbert was copied from a full-scale oil painting. Whereas Hilliard's limnings are noticeably different from public paintings, Oliver's limnings are essentially oil paintings in little (although Oliver continued to use water colors).<sup>77</sup> Here may be the explanation for Tofte's reference to "oyle" colors in his limning poem. There is, in other words, a kind of split in Oliver's miniatures: they are highly private and at the same time highly public. It is a split that I would in literature most associate with drama, for example *Hamlet*, where the inner thoughts of the hero are acted out for all to see. This is not to say that *Hamlet* does not remain impenetrable. His mystery,



FIGURE 11 (left) Nicholas Hilliard, *Unknown Youth*, c. 1588. 2 x 1½ in., private collection. Reproduced from Graham Reynolds, *Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver: An Exhibition to Commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the Birth of Nicholas Hilliard* (London, 1947), no. 33.

FIGURE 12 (right) Ascribed to Isaac Oliver, *Unknown Youth*, c. 1588. 1¾ x 1½ in., Beauchamp collection, Madresfield Court, Malvern, England. Reproduced from Reynolds, *Hilliard and Oliver*, no. 123.

however, comes largely from his compulsion to display himself in all his complexity. It is not the kind of mystery—secrecy would be a better word—that we see in Hilliard's miniatures and Sidney's sonnets, where the inner self is only gestured at through public forms of display. Significantly, Oliver, in addition to toning down Hilliardesque ornamentalism, also phased out Hilliard's swirling gold mottos or devices that point to "the secretes of the minde." Symptomatic of his devotion to a more dramatic, psychological representation of self, Oliver often painted his sitters in masquing costumes. He also lived in the Blackfriar's liberty, a haunt of the players.<sup>78</sup>

To the extent, then, the sonneteers following Sidney and Hilliard "represent" their private loves through conventional artifice that keeps them hidden, they look back to the artifice of secrecy we have traced in this paper. To the extent, however, they strive dramatically to publish that inwardness, they look forward to the psychological "realism" of Oliver and drama. One can trace the latter movement in the tendency of the poets to focus on the limnings within their

hearts and describe them, rather than to thrust toward the heart in gesture only as does Sidney. Shakespeare's sonnets most fully achieve the sense of psychological realism. It is as if he had already penetrated to the heart and were trying to paint what he there saw, or could not see. Sonnet 24, for example, depicts an internalized vision of the lover with a picture hanging at his heart. In Shakespeare, one truly feels the "sense of internal experience at a distance from outward expression" that Ferry argues first emerges in Elizabethan sonnets.<sup>79</sup> Sidney often invokes this distance as well, just as he often rejects the "lyvely collors" of Hilliard in favor of more shadowed perspective painting. Indeed, the conversation with Sidney reported by Hilliard specifically addresses the problem of perspective in painting. As we repeatedly saw in his sonnets, however, Sidney can only achieve the inner *through* the outer, the private *through* the public, the sincere self *through* self-display. One could argue that his private self is, therefore, not at all private since it is dependent on the public. But one could counter that it is intensely private since it is unrepresentable. Perhaps we might best propose that Sidney's and Hilliard's artifice of secrecy constitutes the first step or threshold ushering in the "modern" idea of self at a distance from public expression. Poet and limner place one foot forward in responding to the growing need to express the inner, private self; at the same time they keep the other foot back, heeding the equally urgent demand to acknowledge reliance upon a public court ruled by the queen of artifice and Queen of Hearts, Elizabeth.<sup>80</sup>

## Notes

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1. *Memoirs of Sir James Melville of Halhill, 1535–1617*, ed. A. Francis Steuart (New York, 1930), 92 and 94.
2. *Ibid.*, 94.
3. J. Disraeli, *Curiosities of Literature*, 6th ed., 3 vols. (London, 1817), 1:491.
4. Marville, quoted in Disraeli, *Curiosities*, 485; Sir John Harington, *Nugae Antiquae: Being a Miscellaneous Collection of Original Papers in Prose and Verse. Written in the Reigns of Henry VIII, Queen Mary, Elizabeth, King James, Etc.*, ed. Henry Harington, Jr., vol. 2 (London, 1775), 217.
5. Since the sixteenth century loosely applied the term *sonnet* to any short poem (George Gascoigne, "Certayne notes of Instruction concerning the making of verse or ryme in English, Written at the request of Master Edouardo Donati" (1575), in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith, 2 vols. [Oxford, 1904], 1:55), I shall include in my discussion general reference to love lyrics; my goal, however, is the formal fourteen-line sonnet that increasingly figured in the 1590s. For Linda Bradley Salamon on sonnets and miniatures, see her "The Art of Nicholas Hilliard," in *Nicholas Hilliard's Art of Limning: A New Edition of A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning, Writ by N. Hilliard*, transcription by Arthur F. Kinney, commentary and apparatus by Salamon (Boston, 1983), 104–6. Numerous art historians of miniatures have made passing reference to sonnets as well: for example, Roy Strong, "From Manuscript to Minia-

ture," in *The English Miniature*, ed. John Murdoch, et al. (New Haven, 1981), 73; John Pope-Hennessy, *A Lecture on Nicholas Hilliard* (London, 1949), 19; and Carl Winter, *Elizabethan Miniatures* (1943; reprint ed., Harmondsworth, 1949), 8.

In addition to the above works, my study of miniatures is especially indebted to: Nicholas Hilliard, *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning*, bound with Edward Norgate, *A More Compendious Discourse Concerning ye Art of Liming*, eds. R. K. R. Thornton and T. G. S. Cain (Manchester, 1981); Mary Edmond, *Hilliard and Oliver: The Lives and Works of Two Great Miniaturists* (London, 1983); Roy Strong, *The English Renaissance Miniature* (New York, 1983), and his *Nicholas Hilliard* (London, 1975); Roy Strong and V. J. Murrell, *Artists of the Tudor Court: The Portrait Miniature Rediscovered, 1520–1620* (London, 1983); Jim Murrell, *The Way Howe to Lymne: Tudor Miniatures Observed* (London, 1983); Leslie Hotson, "Queen Elizabeth's Master Painter," *Sunday Times Colour Magazine*, 22 March 1970, 46–53; Daphne Foskett, *British Portrait Miniatures: A History* (London, 1963); Eric Mercer, "Miniatures," in *English Art, 1553–1625*, ed. Eric Mercer, vol. 8 of *The Oxford History of English Art*, ed. T. S. R. Boase (Oxford, 1949–78), 190–216; Graham Reynolds, "The Painter Plays the Spider," *Apollo* 79 (1964): 179–84, as well as his *English Portrait Miniatures* (London, 1952) and *Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver: An Exhibition to Commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the Birth of Nicholas Hilliard* (London, 1947); Erna Auerbach, *Nicholas Hilliard* (London, 1961); Torben Holck Colding, *Aspects of Miniature Painting: Its Origins and Development* (Copenhagen, 1953); and John Pope-Hennessy, "Nicholas Hilliard and Mannerist Art Theory," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 6 (1943): 89–100.

6. The title of this section is quoted from Hilliard, *Treatise*, 65. Future citations of Hilliard's treatise will be to this edition and will appear in the body of the paper.
7. In her landmark biography, Edmond convincingly counters past views that the miniature, from the 1570s on, became "democratized"; *Hilliard and Oliver*, 101. See also Mercer, "Miniatures," 197.
8. *Ibid.*, 196. For the public placing of oil paintings in the gallery, see Roy Strong, *The English Icon: Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture* (London, 1969), 44–45; also Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (1978; reprint ed., New York, 1980), 101–2. For the terms *miniature*, *limning*, and *painting in little*, see, for example, Foskett, *Miniatures*, 33; for *miniature*, in particular, see Colding, *Miniature Painting*, 9–19.
9. "Sir H. Unton to her Majesty, from Coucy, Feb. 3, 1595–6," in William Cecil Burghley, *A Collection of State Papers Relating to Affairs in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1571 to 1596*, transcribed by William Murdin, vol. 2 (London, 1759), 718.
10. A. L. Rowse, *The Elizabethan Renaissance: The Life of the Society* (London, 1971), 40–41. See also Paul Johnson, *Elizabeth I* (New York, 1974), 80; Peter Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration in England, France and Holland* (New Haven, 1978), 57–60; and Girouard, *Country House*, who traces from medieval times the increasing retreat within proliferating rooms. Such withdrawal enacted the common sixteenth-century metaphor for self-examination, noted by Anne Ferry in *The "Inward" Language: Sonnets of Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne* (Chicago, 1983), 46–48. Ferry's objection to the generally accepted thesis that the increasing interest in private rooms in the sixteenth century indicates growing interest in the private self (47–55) will be answered in the course of this paper.
11. J. F. Hayward, *English Cabinets in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1964), 3. For the placing of cabinets "in the main chamber or bedroom," see Doreen Yarwood, *The English Home: A Thousand Years of Furnishing and Decoration* (New York, 1956), 90.

12. Strong, "Manuscript," 73, 76.
13. Ibid., 76. Not until the 1630s would the miniature reside again primarily in the cabinet box—and then as part of the connoisseur's collection in a cabinet room (80–84). See also Strong's "Introduction: The Tudor Miniature: Mirror of an Age," in Strong and Murrell, *Artists*, 9–10.
14. Strong, "Manuscript," 73.
15. *Princely Magnificence: Court Jewels of the Renaissance, 1500–1630*, Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition catalogue (London, c. 1980), catalogue no. 46, p. 62. Originally the gold cupids at the sides of the case were also black.
16. Edmund Lodge, *Illustrations of British History, Biography, and Manners, in the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, and James I, Exhibited in a Series of Original Papers, Selected from the Manuscripts of the Noble Families of Howard, Talbot, and Cecil . . . with Numerous Notes and Observations*, 3 vols. (London, 1791), 3:146–47.
17. Ibid., 147.
18. Reynolds, *Hilliard and Oliver*, 13.
19. Ferry, "Inward" Language, 48–49.
20. Mercer, "Miniatures," 199.
21. "Limning emerges," remarks Strong in *English Renaissance Miniature*, "... full of covert tricks and recipes passed secretly from master to pupil" (8). See also his "Manuscript," 60; and Jim Murrell's "The Craft of the Miniaturist," in *The English Miniature*, 7.
22. See, for example, Mercer, "Miniatures," 199; for goldsmithing, in particular, see Colding, *Miniature Painting*, 26–40. Colding posits a third influence in the medal (40); see also Foskett, *Miniatures*, 33–34. For limning and illumination, see esp. Strong, "Manuscript."
23. Pope-Hennessy in *Lecture* particularly stresses Hilliard's concern with "line" (20) and, in specific reference to the *Unknown Lady*, with "pattern" (21–22). See also his "Mannerist Art," 96–97.
24. Murrell, "Craft," 6. Murrell provides the best analyses of limning techniques and materials. I will be quoting primarily from his "Craft," but much of what he says there reappears in *Howe to Lyme* and in his chapters in *Artists* (13–32).
25. Murrell, "Craft," 9. For Hilliard's gem- and lace-work, see pp. 6–8.
26. I have deduced Hilliard's limning procedure especially from Murrell, "Craft," 5–14; and Hilliard, *Treatise*. Some of the "flatness" of Hilliard's faces comes from the fading of fugitive flesh tints; as Mercer points out, however, Hilliard's style of limning here worked with time; "Miniatures," 201. On playing cards, see esp. Murrell, "The Art of Limning," in *Artists*, 14–15. On the card backing Elizabeth's limning, see Philip Norman, ed., "Nicholas Hilliard's Treatise Concerning 'The Arte of Limning,'" *The Walpole Society* 1 (1911–12): 54.
27. Pope-Hennessy, "Mannerist Art," 99. For sugar candy in limning see, for example, Murrell, "Craft," 11. For Elizabeth's limning "mask of youth," see esp. Strong, *English Renaissance Miniature*, 118–22.
28. Auerbach, *Hilliard*, 103; Pope-Hennessy, *Lecture*, 23.
29. Reynolds, "Painter," 283.
30. For Hilliard's turn to more private representation, see esp. Auerbach, *Hilliard*, 97–110. For the influence of tournament *imprese* on Hilliard, see esp. Strong, *English Renaissance Miniature*, 95–99; see also his "Manuscript," 68–73; "Tournaments and Masques," in *Artists*, 133–38; and of the *Roses* miniature, in particular, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London, 1977), 75–78. For Mercer on the decline of the private miniature, see esp. "Miniatures," 206–8.



31. See esp. Strong, *Cult*, 68–77; also Leslie Hotson, *Mr. W. H.* (London, 1964), 208–12. Hotson argues, unconvincingly I believe, that the miniature pictures not love but friendship (Shakespeare's for William Hatcliffe), and he receives tentative support from Edmond, *Hilliard and Oliver*, 89–91. The majority of art historians, however, agree with Strong in seeing the youth as a lover. For the added association of tawny and black with melancholy, see, for example, Strong, *English Icon*, 34.
32. Epistle of "N. W." prefacing Paolo Giovio, *The Worthy Tract of Paulus Iovius (1585)*, trans. Samuel Daniel; bound with Giovio's *Dialogo dell'impresie militari et amorose* (reprint ed., Delmar, N.Y., 1976). Camden is quoted by both Strong, *Cult*, 77, and Hotson, *W. H.*, 208.
33. On the Pompey allusion, see esp. Strong, *Cult*, 77–78; and Hotson, *W. H.*, 212–13ff. On Essex as the *Roses* youth, see Strong, *Cult*, 60–83; Edmond, who does not accept Strong's identification, argues the roses are not eglantine; *Hilliard and Oliver*, 89–91. Essex secretly marries Sidney's widow in 1590; *Dictionary of National Biography*.
34. Hotson, *W. H.*, 206. Strong, in the catalogue of *Artists*, argues the miniature is by Isaac Oliver, not Hilliard (109); all other art historians, so far as I can find, attribute it to Hilliard.
35. Noted, for example, by Hotson, *W. H.*, 206.
36. Section title quote from "A pretie Poeme" (no. 20), in Nicholas Breton, et al., *The Arbor of Amorous Devices, 1597*, intro. Hyder Edward Rollins (reprint ed., Cambridge, Mass., 1936), 19.
37. Lodge, *Illustrations*, 718.
38. Edmund Spenser, sonnet 17, *Amoretti* (1595), in *The Minor Poems: Part Two*, eds. Charles Grosvenor Osgood and Henry Gibbons Lotspeich, vol. 8 of *The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition*, ed. Edwin Greenlaw, et al. (Baltimore, 1932–49). On the structural "movements" of sonnet sequences, see esp. Carol Thomas Neely, "The Structure of English Renaissance Sonnet Sequences," *ELH* 45 (1978): 359–89.
39. Edmund Molyneux on the *Arcadia*; quoted in Malcolm William Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney* (New York, 1967), 225.
40. J. C., prefatory Latin poem to "Alcilia: Philoparthen's Louing Follie (1595): From the Unique Exemplar in the Town Library, Hamburg," ed. Alexander B. Grosart (St. George's, Lancs., 1879), 6, trans. in introduction, xii; Thomas Nash, preface to Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (first quarto ed., 1591), in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, 2:224; William Alexander, "Sonet 1," *Aurora. Containing the first fancies of the Authors youth*, sig. A3r.
41. Lyric 3, *The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh*, ed. Agnes M. C. Latham (London, 1951), 4–5; *A Hundreth Sundrey Flowres: From the Original Edition of 1573*, ed. Ruth Loyd Miller, 2nd ed. (Port Washington, N.Y., 1975), 122.
42. Samuel Daniel, dedication to "Delia. Contayning certayne Sonnets: with the complaint of Rosamond," in *Poems and A Defence of Ryme*, ed. Arthur Colby Sprague (1950; reprint ed., Chicago, 1965), 9; "H. W. to the Reader" and "The letter of G. T. to his very friend H. W. concerning this worke," in *Flowres*, 117 and 118, 120–21, respectively; William Percy, "To the Reader," in *Sonnets to the Fairest Coelia*, sig. Ayr; R[obert] T[ofte], "The Epistle Dedicatorie . . .," "To the Reader . . .," and "A Friends iust excuse about the Booke and Author, in his absence," in *Lavra, The Toyes of a Traueller. Or. The Feast of Fancie. Diuided into three Parts*, letters reprinted in Robert Tofte, *Alba: The Month's Minde of a Melancholy Lover* (1598), ed. Alexander B. Grosart (St. George's, Lancs., 1880), xxvi, xxvii, xlii, respectively.
43. "The Printer to the Reader," *Flowres*, 113.

44. For the identity of H. W. and G. T. as well as Oxford's secret signature, see the editor's preface to *Flowres*, 5; see also Bernard M. Ward's chapters in *Flowres*, 28–34 and 75–89. J. W. Saunders views secret inscriptions, along with initials and protestations of betrayal, as ways of bypassing the stigma of printing; "The Stigma of Print: A Note on the Social Bases of Tudor Poetry," *Essays in Criticism* 1 (1951), esp. 143–46.
45. An allusion, of course, to Penelope Rich—Sidney's Stella—in sonnets 9, 24, 35, and 37 of *Astrophil and Stella* (composed c. 1581–82; published 1591), in *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. William A. Ringler, Jr. (Oxford, 1962); all citations of Sidney's poetry are to this edition.
46. For the portrait miniature's descent from illuminated manuscripts, see esp. Strong, "Manuscript," 25–45; for portrait miniatures on manuscripts, see, for example, 41 and 58. Hilliard, notes Strong, limned in 1571 "a booke of portraitures" (quoted p. 48). For Elizabeth's prayer-book limnings, see Auerbach, *Hilliard*, 77–83; see also Edmond, who most fully treats Hilliard's involvement in the Elizabeth/Alençon marriage negotiations; *Hilliard and Oliver*, 61–63. For Sidney's involvement, see Wallace, *Life of Sidney*, 203 and 216–19.
47. Ringler, *Poems of Sidney*, 460.
48. The use of the adjective *daintie* reinforces the sense of rich ornament that hides. *Daintie* suggests "fine" or "delicate," perhaps overly delicate: "fastidious." As the expression to be *dainty* of implies, the "daintie" person can also be "careful, chary, or sparing" (*OED*). He keeps to himself. He is private. This is how G. T. uses "daintie of" in making public the identity of Gascoigne in *Flowres*: "I will now deliver unto you so many more of Master Gascoignes Poems as have come to my hands, *who hath never beene dayntie of his doings, and therefore I conceale not his name . . .*"; 192, my emphasis. Sidney himself seems to associate *daintie* with concealment in sonnet 41. The poet, having won a court tournament, lists suggestions advanced by onlookers for his success before turning to the true cause of his victory—"Stella look on." Among the wrong guesses is that of a "daintier judge": "Horsemen my skill in horsmanship aduance; / Towne-folkes my strength; a daintier judge applies / His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise." The "daintier judge" rejects the undelicate reasons for victory—"skill in horsmanship" and brute "strength"—and turns instead, significantly, to the idea of "sleight." *Sleight* itself can mean "skill"; but, as the *OED* notes, its common meaning down to the seventeenth century, "frequently contrasted with *strength, might, or force*," is "craft or cunning employed so as to deceive; deceitful, subtle, or wily dealing or policy; artifice, strategy, trickery." Akin to the "artifice" of hiddenness and ornament, "daintie wits" both display and mask their "fancies" in bravery.
49. Strong, *Cult*, 60; Ringler, *Poems of Sidney*, 460. Hilliard, when in France (1576–78), apparently met Ronsard; *Treatise*, 69.
50. See the editors' introduction to Hilliard, *Treatise*, 43; for the source of ivory, see Alfred Maskell, *Ivories* (Rutland, Vt., 1966), 25. For more on limning pigments and their sources, see Murrell, *Howe to Lymne*, 67–70.
51. Mercer, "Miniatures," 197. While the normal charge in Elizabeth's reign for an uncased miniature was £3, notes Strong, "When Hilliard provided the setting the price could soar." A jeweled miniature of James, for instance, cost in 1615 £35; *Hilliard*, 17. A more extravagant example is James's gift to the duchess of Lennox: "a fair chain of diamonds with his picture on it, valued by the jewellers at £8,600"; quoted in Peter Burke, "Renaissance Jewels in Their Social Setting," in *Princely Magnificence*, 11. For Sidney's money difficulties and lavish spending, see Wallace, *Life of Sidney*, 126.
52. William Cherubini, "The 'Goldenness' of Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*: Test of a Quan-

titative-Stylistics Routine," *Language and Style* 8 (1975): 56.

53. *Ibid.*, 52.

54. See note 5.

55. Characteristically, notes Jean Robertson, Sidney throws the weight of the sonnet "on to the final line"; "Sir Philip Sidney and his Poetry," in *Elizabethan Poetry*, eds. John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies, no. 2 (London, 1960), 125. For Sidney on *energia*, see *An Apologie for Poetrie* (composed c. 1583; published 1595), in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, 1:201. Since forcible sincerity in *Astrophil and Stella* exists in and through conventional ornament, Sidney's *energia* in practice comes closer to the combined concepts of *energia* and *enargia* enumerated by George Puttenham in *The Arte of English Poesie. Contrived into three Bookes: The first of Poets and Poesie, the second of Proportion, the third of Ornament* (1589): "This ornament then is of two sortes, one to satisfie & delight th'eare onely by a goodly outward shew set vpon the matter with wordes and speaches smothly and tunably running, another by certaine intendments or sence of such wordes & speaches inwardly working a stirre to the mynde. The first qualitie the Greeks called *Enargie*, of this word *argos*, because it geueth a glorious lustre and light. This latter they called *Energia*, of *ergon*, because it wrought with a strong and vertuous operation"; in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, 2:148. The "outward shew" or "glorious lustre" of Sidney's ornament (recalling Hilliard's demand that the artist imitate the "proper lustre" of colors; 91) itself points within, "inwardly working a stirre to the mynde" of the poet and his audience. *Through* the outer layers of built-up ornament in *Astrophil and Stella* we get a sense of forcibly penetrating into the poet's sincere inner "passions."

56. See also Ferry, "Inward" *Language*, 142–43.

57. For the poem-within-a-poem in *Astrophil and Stella*, see esp. Ferry, *ibid.*, 143–47, who also discusses sonnet 80 (143–44); see also Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago, 1968), 149–50.

58. Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, "The Politics of *Astrophil and Stella*," *Studies in English Literature* 24 (1984): 54. See also Marotti, "'Love is not Love': Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order," *ELH* 49 (1982): 396–406; and Clark Hulse's "Stella's Wit: Penelope Rich as Reader of Sidney's Sonnets," forthcoming in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Margaret Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy Vickers (Chicago, 1986).

59. See Cherubini, "Goldenness," 55. On the virtual identity of sonnet heroine and queen, see esp. Jones and Stallybrass, "Politics," 63–68. The poet's turning to public service at the end of the sequence in sonnet 107 is thus not an eschewing of his private love for public "Ambition" (27) because he never really left public service in serving his personal lady, his "Queene" (107). We should here also recall Puttenham's noted analogy between the artifice of the poet and the politics of the courtier. Since Sidney's passageways of ornament that point to the heart are conventional or public, they are inherently political and, like the politics of the courtier, "dissembling"; see Puttenham, *English Poesie*, 182–87.

60. The publisher's precise term for the sequence: a "famous device"; Albert Feuillerat, ed., *The Complete Works of Sir Philip Sidney*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1922), 369; Hulse, "Stella's Wit," similarly likens the sonnets to *imprese*.

61. William Camden; quoted in Katherine Duncan-Jones, "Sidney's Personal *Imprese*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970): 323; for stars in Sidney's *imprese*, see p. 322.

62. Hulse, "Stella's Wit."

63. On Astrophil's manipulation and problems of self-definition, see, for example, Richard A. Lanham, "Astrophil and Stella: Pure and Impure Persuasion," *English Literary Renaissance* 2 (1972): 100-15; Andrew D. Weiner, "Structure and 'Fore Conceit' in *Astrophil and Stella*," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 16 (1974): 1-25; Alan Sinfield, "Astrophil's Self-Deception," *Essays in Criticism* 28 (1978): 1-18; Daniel Traister, "Sidney's Purposeful Humor: *Astrophil and Stella* 59 and 83," *ELH* 49 (1982): 751-64; and Thomas P. Roche, Jr., "Astrophil and Stella: A Radical Reading," *Spenser Studies* 3 (1982): 139-91. For a different version of Stella's "ABSENT presence," see Murray Krieger, "Poetic Presence and Illusion I: Renaissance Theory and the Duplicity of Metaphor," in *Poetic Presence and Illusion: Essays in Critical History and Theory* (Baltimore, 1979), 3-27.
64. Girouard, *Country House*, 110.
65. On the poet's re-creation of self in each sonnet of a sequence, see also Richard A. Lanham, *The Motives of Eloquence: Literary Rhetoric in the Renaissance* (New Haven, 1976), 124 and passim. I would substitute the "space" repeatedly gestured at through penetration for Charles Altieri's interesting but "horizontal" "space of rhetorical performance" that balances "distance with desire, freedom with submission, and intellectual control with passionate obsession," as well as ideal with real; "Rhetorics, Rhetoricity and the Sonnet as Performance," *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 25 (1980): 4, 13.
66. Gascoigne, "Certayne Notes," 47.
67. "Wilson to the Queen," 11 June 1577, in *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1575-77*, ed. Allan James Crosby (London, 1880), 596.
68. The names of Hilliard's last three surviving children—Lettice, Penelope, and Robert—testify to the patronage of the Leicester-Essex circle; see, for example, Edmond, *Hilliard and Oliver*, 84.
69. Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1593), ed. Maurice Evans (New York, 1977), 166; I am assuming Musidorus wears the miniature in the same fashion as the knight from whom he took it.
70. Sidney, *Arcadia*, 167.
71. Section title quote from canzon 14, *Zepheria* (1594; reprint ed., Manchester, 1869), 18.
72. J. W. Lever, *The Elizabethan Love Sonnet* (London, 1956), 103.
73. "Sonnet" 75, *The Vanytyes of Sir Arthur Gorges Youthe*, in *The Poems of Sir Arthur Gorges*, ed. Helen Estabrook Sandison (Oxford, 1953), 74; "To Mr. Hilliard, vpon occasion of a picture he made of my Ladie Rich," Todd ms. (ms. Dyce 44), in *The Poems of Henry Constable*, ed. Joan Grundy (Liverpool, 1960), 158.
74. Samuel Daniel, sonnet 34, *Delia*, 27; canzon 14, *Zepheria*, 18; Robert Tofte, *Alba*, 23; Michael Drayton, amour 14 and 46, *Ideas Mirrour: Amours in Quatorzains* (1594), in *The Works of Michael Drayton*, ed. J. William Hebel, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1931), 104, 121. On limning pencils see, for example, Murrell, "Craft," 12.
75. For Oliver's style in relation to Hilliard, see esp. Edmond, *Hilliard and Oliver*, 111 and passim; Murrell, *Howe to Lynne*, 38-46; Strong, "Manuscript," 62-68; Mercer, "Miniatures," 210-14; Auerbach, *Hilliard*, 235-54; and Reynolds, *Hilliard and Oliver*, 13-17. Auerbach (103, 236) specifically contrasts the two limnings of the *Unknown Youth*; see also Reynolds (16). On the immediate followers (and sons) of Hilliard and Oliver—Lawrence Hilliard and Peter Oliver, respectively—see esp. Strong, *English Renaissance Miniature*, 186-88. The miniature of Drayton, attributed to Peter Oliver, is reproduced on the frontispiece to Bernard H. Newdigate, *Michael Drayton and His Circle* (Oxford, 1961).

76. *The Autobiography of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, ed. Will H. Dircks (London, 1888), 87.
77. See, for example, Mercer, "Miniatures," 210; on the Herbert copy, see *Autobiography*, 86.
78. For Oliver's rejection of Hilliardesque inscriptions, see, for example, Edmond, *Hilliard and Oliver*, 111. Strong, esp. in "Tournaments and Masques," aligns Hilliard with the former (133–38) and Oliver with the latter (138–42); see also Edmond, 152. For Oliver's residence in Blackfriars, see *ibid.*, 138–39; Ben Jonson, the leading masque writer, she further notes, also lived there for a time (152).
79. Ferry, "Inward" *Language*, 3.
80. It is highly significant, I suggest, that under Elizabeth, the quintessential embodiment of the artifice of secrecy, there emerged a fully operational secret service never to be matched by the Stuarts. The organization was founded by Sidney's father-in-law Walsingham, who operated out of his own pocket and his own home, which he turned into a school for forgery; R. A. Haldane, *The Hidden World* (London, 1976), 60–61 and 65. Sidney himself may have attended some classes—we know he presented Elizabeth with a cipher he devised; Wallace, *Life of Sidney*, 270. He also went on an informal spy mission for the queen; *ibid.*, 173. While Elizabeth's secret service is obviously a political organization, its way of working through private individuals as well as its inherent concern with secrecy links this new development to the developing interest in a secret self that we have seen in Sidney's sonnets and Hilliard's limnings. Significantly, Hilliard's miniatures were often linked to spy missions. Constable, for instance, operating in 1588 as an agent at James's court in Scotland, makes intriguing reference in code to his miniature of Lady Rich. And we hear of a Catholic plot against Elizabeth in 1591 that involves getting hold of a Hilliard miniature of Lady Arabella Stuart; see esp. Edmond, *Hilliard and Oliver*, 94–95; 114–18. Art historians take pains to discount Hilliard's culpability in these operations, and I have no reason to suspect else. What is fascinating, however, is that Hilliard's miniatures were considered somehow appropriate—Oliver's were never involved, so far as I know—for this kind of undercover work. Miniaturization of size clearly promoted portability for a spy. But I suspect the very artifice of secrecy Hilliard limned would have furthered their candidacy. Hilliard's miniatures were intricately part of a secret and yet also political self. For the very same reason, I believe, the "small gilded coffer" of Mary Queen of Scots, which was produced at her trial for treason, contained not only eight enciphered letters, but also twelve sonnets; Johnson, *Elizabeth I*, 165; Haldane, who notes the letters were enciphered (64), reproduces the cipher used (63). Sidney's sonnet devices and Hilliard's limning devices are in a way themselves "ciphers": encoded transmissions of very secret loves offered not only to private ladies but also to her majesty, the queen; for ciphers and *Astrophil and Stella*, see also Hulse, "Stella's Wit." Both poet and limner in developing an artifice of secrecy were "On Her Majesty's Secret Service."

## Shakespeare's "Perjur'd Eye"

IN THE FIRST PORTION of his sonnet sequence—in the subsequence of sonnets addressed to a young man—Shakespeare writes a matching pair of sonnets that develop the way in which his eye and heart initially are enemies but then are subsequently friends. The first sonnet of the pair begins: "Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war, / How to divide the conquest of thy sight" (46).<sup>1</sup> In contrast, the second sonnet, relying on a "verdict" that "is determined" at the conclusion of sonnet 46, begins: "Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took, / And each doth good turns now unto the other" (47).

Taken together and in sequence, the two sonnets compose an argument *in utramque partem*, with their poet placing himself on both sides of a rhetorical question that is a commonplace in the tradition of the Renaissance sonnet.<sup>2</sup> Despite the conventional opposition, however, the two sonnets confidently argue to what is the same, and equally conventional, conclusion: namely, that their poet's eye and heart do "good turns now unto the other" (47). Thus, in the first sonnet, after meditating on the war between his eye and heart, the poet syllogistically and Neo-Platonically derives the moral that: "As thus: mine eye's due is thy outward part, / And my heart's right thy inward love of heart." In turn, in the second sonnet, from thinking on the amity between his eye and heart, the poet reassuringly discovers that "thy picture in my sight / Awakes my heart to heart's and eye's delight." Taken together and in sequence, therefore, the two sonnets respond to the rhetorical question that they raise by juxtaposing a *concordia discors* and a *coincidentia oppositorum* each against the other. Both sonnets speak to the fact that their poet's eye and heart, however much they differ from or with each other, are equally "delighted." In both sonnets, eye and heart will peacefully "divide the conquest of thy sight," as though, from the ideal perspective shared by the two sonnets, eye and heart are complementary and coordinated aspects of each other.

In a straightforward way, the rhetorical wit of these two sonnets consists of thus hendiadystically arriving, from different starting points, at a common destination, for in this way the two sonnets manage to resolve, or to beg the question raised by, a traditional *débat*. Yet, however witty, the poems take seriously the equivalence of the conclusions that they share. In both cases the relationship of eye and heart, whether initially antipathetic or sympathetic, leads immediately, via complementary antithesis, to a recuperative and benign assessment of yet

other differences adduced. In war or peace the sonnets' several binaries combine to generate a clarity of eye and purity of heart whose own discrete proprieties and properties in turn reciprocally establish, or are established by, the integrity and integration of the other categorical oppositions to which the poems refer. In the first sonnet, for example, sonnet 46, the difference between "outward" and "inward" is secured and reconciled because the vision of the eye and the "thinking" of the heart can be harmoniously apportioned between the clear-cut opposition of "The clear eye's moiety and the dear heart's part." In the second sonnet, 47, the absence of the beloved is converted or transmuted into presence because: "So either by thy picture or my love, / Thyself away are present still with me." This systematic complementarity—whereby opposites either are the same or, as opposites, still somehow go compatibly together—speaks to a general, indeed, a generic, homogeneity subtending both sonnets, something that informs them more deeply than the thematic heterogeneity that the two sonnets only provisionally or momentarily evoke. In the first sonnet it is the difference between eye and heart that establishes the concord between them, whereas in the second sonnet the concord derives from their similarity. But this difference, which is the difference between difference and similarity, turns out not to make much difference. In both sonnets the eye is "clear" and the heart is "dear" by virtue of a governing structure of likeness and contrast, of identity and difference, of similarity and contrariety, that both sonnets equally and isomorphically employ.

What these two young man sonnets, 46 and 47, share, therefore, as Lévi-Strauss might say, is the sameness of their differences: what joins them together is a structural identity, or a structure of identity that is yet more fundamental and more powerful than their apparent opposition. At the level of theme and of poetic psychology, this yields the Petrarchan commonplace in accord with which the poet's eye and heart come instantly to complement each other, moving from war to peace, from antipathy to sympathy, in a progress that constitutes a kind of shorthand summary of the amatory assumptions of ideal admiration, e.g., the way Cupid shoots his arrows through the lover's eye into the lover's heart.<sup>3</sup> This is a specifically *visual* desire, for in both sonnets it is as something of the eye that the young man's "fair appearance lies" within the poet's heart. In both sonnets "thy picture in my sight" indifferently "Awakes my heart to heart's and eye's delight."

Such homogenizing visual imagery, applied to the poet's love, to his beloved, and to his poetry, pervades the sequence of sonnets addressed to the young man, and this imagery is regularly employed, as in sonnets 46 and 47, to characterize a material likeness or sameness that conjoins or renders consubstantial two distinctive yet univocally collated terms: not only the poet's eye and heart, but, also, the poet and his young man (e.g., " 'Tis thee (myself) that for myself I praise, / Painting my age with beauty of thy days" [62]), the young man and, in the opening

sonnets which urge the young man to procreate, *his* young man (e.g., “Look in thy glass and tell the face thou viewest, / Now is the time that face should form another” [3]), as well as the poet’s poetry and that of which the poetry speaks (e.g., “So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee” [18]). In general, the poet identifies his first-person “I” with the ideal eye of the young man—“Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done” (24)—and then proceeds to identify these both with the “wondrous scope” (105) of his visionary verse: “So till the judgement that yourself arise, / You live in this, and dwell in lovers’ eyes” (55).

In all these cases the visual imagery that Shakespeare employs is, of course, nothing but conventional. Indeed, the sonnets addressed to the young man regularly allude to the conventionality of their visual imagery, often characterizing such imagery, as well as that of which it is an image, as something old-fashioned, even antiquated, as in the literary retrospection of sonnet 59:

O that record could with a backward look,  
Even of five hundred courses of the sun.  
Show me your image in some antique book,  
Since mind at first in character was done!

There are a good many reasons why the young man’s poet might “look” in this “backward” way to specifically visual imagery, to imagery of vision, in order, as sonnet 59 goes on to say, to “see what the old world could say / To this composed wonder of your frame.” With regard to the poet’s ideal desire, which aims to conjoin poetic subject with poetic object—“thou mine, I thine” (108)—the young man’s poet can rely upon a familiar Petrarchist motif, derived from Stoic optics, of eroticized *eidōla* or likenesses, intromissive and extromissive, whose very physics establishes a *special* (from *specere*, “to look at”) coincidence of lover and beloved, as, for example, when Astrophil, at the beginning of Sidney’s sonnet sequence, looks into his heart to write, and finds there pre-engraved or “stell’d” upon it the stylized image or *imago* of the Stella whom he loves. In turn, this physics of the *eidōlon* presupposes an equally familiar and specifically idealist metaphysics of genus and species whereby individual particulars are but subspecies of a universal form or type, declensions of a paradigmatic archetype whose immanent universality is regularly and perennially conceived in terms of light, as in Platonic *eidos*, from *idein*, “to see,” or as the end of the *Paradiso*, where Dante sees “La forma universal” in his vision of “luce eterna” and “semplice lume” (in this divine light, we can add, Dante also sees the painted “likeness,” the “effige,” of himself).<sup>4</sup> Moreover, again in ways that are nothing but conventional, the poetry of idealization, especially as it develops in the self-consciously literary tradition of the Renaissance sonnet, characteristically assimilates such visual imagery, which is its imagery of the ideal, to itself, so as thereby to idealize itself as effective *simulacrum*,



physical and metaphysical, of that which it admires. As an activity of “stelling,”—e.g., “Mine eye hath play’d the painter and hath stell’d / Thy beauty’s form in table of my heart” (24)—such poetry is *Ideas Mirrour*, as Drayton called his sonnet sequence, and it is so precisely because, being something visual and visionary, it can claim to be not only the reflection of, but also the objectification of, its idea of its ideal.<sup>5</sup>

Speaking very generally, it is fair to say that this is the regular force of visual imagery in the tradition of the literature or poetry of praise—a tradition that goes back to the praise of love in the *Symposium* or *Phaedrus*, but one that is especially vital in the particular literary genre of the sonnet, where it goes without saying that the poet is a lover who desires only that which he admires. With regard to poetic procedure or, rather, with regard to what is the common and long-standing understanding of poetic procedure, this is a tradition of specifically visionary poetic likeness, either mimetic likeness, whereby poetry is the simulating representation of that which it presents—“ut pictura poesis,” speaking picture—or figural likeness, as when Aristotle defines metaphor (whether based on analogy or commutative proportion) as the capacity “to see the same” (*theōrein homoion*), metaphor being for Aristotle, as for the tradition of rhetorical theory that derives from him, an activity of speculative likening that, quite literally, “theorizes sameness.”<sup>6</sup> Correspondingly, with regard to poetic subjectivity, this is a literary tradition in which the poet is a panegyric *vates* or seer who, at least ideally, is the same as that which he sees (e.g. Dante’s reflexively reflective “effige”), just as, with regard to poetic semiosis, poetic language, as *eikōn*, *speculum*, *imago*, *eidōlon*, etc., is Cratylitically the same as that of which it speaks, for example, the way Dante identifies his own “beatitude” with “those words that praise my Lady,” his “lodano” with “la donna,” or the way Petrarch puns on “Laura,” “laud,” and “laurel.”<sup>7</sup> These are general themes and motifs by reference to which the poetry of praise characteristically become a praise of poetry itself.<sup>8</sup>

It is possible to get some sense of how very familiar, over-familiar, this received literary tradition is to Shakespeare if we register the formulaic way the young man’s poet in sonnet 105 identifies, one with the others, his “love,” his “beloved,” and his “songs and praises”:

Let not my love be called idolatry,  
Nor my beloved as an idol show,  
Since all alike my songs and praises be.

What joins these three together is the ideality they share, an ideality that establishes a three-term correspondence between the speaking, the spoken, and the speech of praise. “‘Fair,’ ‘kind,’ and ‘true’ is all my argument,” says the poet in sonnet 105, and these “Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords” (“Three themes” that sonnet 105 repeats three times) amount to a phenome-

nological summary, an eidetic reduction, of a Petrarchist metaphysical, erotic, and poetic Ideal: “Fair” identifies the visibility, the *Sichtigkeit*, of an ideal sight (*idein*, “to see”); “kind” identifies the homogeneous categoriality, the formal elementality, of an ideal essence (Platonic *eidos*); “true” identifies the coincidence of ideal knowledge and knowing (*oida*, which is also from *idein*). It is by reference to such precisely conceived and conceited ideality, an ideality that in effect recapitulates the history of ideas up through the Renaissance, that sonnet 105 manages to identify “my love,” “my beloved,” and “my songs and praises,” each one of these being “‘Fair,’ ‘kind,’ and ‘true,’” and therefore, by commutation, each one of these being the same and truthful mirror-image of the other two. In the same idealizing way, this is how sonnets 46 and 47 manage to eliminate the difference between their eye and heart, and thereby manage, despite the difference with which they begin, to say the same thing. More generally, we can say that this is how Shakespeare’s poetry of visionary praise, because it is a “wondrous scope” and because it is addressed to a “wondrous scope,” is always, as sonnet 105 puts it, monotheistically, monogamously, monosyllabically, and monotonously “To one, of one, still such, and ever so.” This is an ideological poetry, as sonnet 105 seems almost to complain, whose virtue consists in the way its copiousness always copies the same ideal sameness—“Since all alike my songs and praises be”—a universal and uni-versing poetic and erotic practice whose very ideality is what renders it incapable of manifesting difference, for, as the poet puts it in sonnet 105:

Kind is my love to-day, to-morrow kind,  
Still constant in a wondrous excellence,  
Therefore my verse, to constancy confin’d,  
One thing expressing, leaves out difference.

However, as the palpable claustrophobia of sonnet 105 suggests, it would be possible to look more closely at the sonnets addressed to the young man so as to see the way they characteristically resist and conflictedly inflect their most ideal expressions of visionary unity, the way they chafe against the “constancy” to which they are “confin’d,” the way that they implicitly “express” the “difference” that they explicitly “leave out.” If, as Murray Krieger has suggested, we are supposed to hear the “one” in sonnet 105’s “wondrous scope,” then so too do we also hear the “two” in its “(T(w)o one, of one, still such, and ever so.”<sup>9</sup> So too, the entire sonnet is colored by the ambiguous logic of its opening “Since”—“Since all alike my songs and praises be”—since this concessive particle explains both why the young man is an idol as well as why he is not. Such complications, though they are implicit, have their effect. As complications, they add a reservation or a wrinkle to the poet’s otherwise straightforward rhetoric of compliment. In such oblique, yet obvious, ways the young man sonnets will regularly situate themselves

and their admiration at one affective and temporal remove from the ideality that they repeatedly and repetitiously invoke, with the peculiar result that in these sonnets an apparently traditionary poetics of ideal light comes regularly to seem what sonnet 123 calls "The dressings of a former sight."

This peculiar retrospection is a consistent aspect of the young man sonnets' imagery of the visual and the visible, imagery that is characteristically presented in the young man sonnets as though it were so tarnished with age that its very reiteration is what interferes with the poet's scopic or specular identification of his poetic "I" with the ideal "eye" of the young man: "For as you were when first your eye I ey'd" (104). In general, the young man's poet, as a visionary poet, seems capable of expressing only a love at second sight; his identification of his ego with his ego-ideal seems worn out by repetition, as though it were the very practice by the poet of an old-fashioned poetry of visionary praise that effectively differentiates the poet as a panegyricizing subject from what he takes to be his ideal and his praiseworthy object. We can take as an example the mixed-up deictic and epideictic compact of the couplet to sonnet 62 which has already been cited—" 'Tis thee (myself) that for myself I praise, / Painting my age with beauty of thy days"—where the confused identification of the poet's "I" and "thou" effectively identifies the first person of the poet with the youth and age of visionary praise. The same thing goes, however, to take another example, for the "stelling" of sonnet 24. At the beginning of the sonnet the poet remembers how, in the past, "Mine eye hath play'd the painter and hath stell'd / Thy beauty's form in table of my heart." At the end of the sonnet, however, speaking in and for the present, the poet observes: "Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art. / They draw but what they see, know not the heart" (24).

In this context, we can recall the fact that Shakespeare writes his sonnet sequence, for the most part, after the Elizabethan sonnet sequence vogue has passed, in what we might call the literary aftermath of the poetry of praise, when such Petrarchist panegyric has come to seem, to some extent, *passé*. This is the historical literary context within which the sonnets addressed to the young man—which are conceived long after what even Sidney, at the inaugural moment of the Elizabethan sonnet sequence, called "Poor Petrarch's long-deceased woes"—make a personal issue out of their self-remarked literary belatedness, regularly associating what they themselves characterize as their old-fashioned literary matter and manner with their poet's sense of his senescence.<sup>10</sup> In sonnet 76, for example, the poet asks:

Why is my verse so barren of new pride?  
So far from variation or quick change?  
Why with the time do I not glance aside  
To new-found methods and to compounds strange?

As the poet first poses them, these are rhetorical questions, questions about rhetoric, but these questions then will press themselves upon the poet's person; they define for him his sense of superannuated self:

Why write I still all one, ever the same,  
And keep invention in a notèd weed,  
That every word doth almost tell my name,  
Showing their birth and where they did proceed?

A good many young man sonnets are concerned with just this kind of literary question, and, as in sonnet 76, in these sonnets it appears as though it is the very asking of the question that turns out to empty out the poet's praising self. It is as though, because he is committed to an ancient poetry of praise, the poet feels himself obliged to pay the debts incurred by a bankrupt literary tradition—as though the poet, as a person, is himself entropically exhausted by the tired tropes with which, according to an old poetic custom, he ornaments himself:

So all my best is dressing old words new,  
Spending again what is already spent:  
For as the sun is daily new and old,  
So is my love still telling what is told. (76)

This is significant because it introduces a new kind of self-consciousness into the already highly self-conscious tradition of the Renaissance sonnet. In familiar ways, the poet in sonnet 76 identifies himself with his own literariness. At the same time, however, it is in an unfamiliar way that the poet's subjectivity here seems worn out by the heavy burden of the literary history that his literariness both examples and extends. For what is novel in a sonnet such as 76 is not so much the way the poet takes the ever-renewed sameness of the sun, its perennially revived vivacity, as a dead metaphor for the animating *energeia* and *enargia* of an ideal metaphoricity. Rather, what is striking, and what is genuinely novel, is the way the visionary poet takes this faded brightness personally, the way he identifies his own poetic person, his own poetic identity, with the after-light of this dead metaphoric sun. Identifying himself with an aged eternity—which is itself the image of an ideal and an unchanging identity—the young man's poet is like a bleached Dante: he is a visionary poet, but he is so, as it were, after the visionary fact, a seer who now sees in a too-frequently reiterated "luce eterna" a vivid image, an *effigie* or an *eidōlon*, of the death of both his light and life, as in sonnet 73: "In me thou seest the twilight of such day / As after sunset fadeth in the west, / Which by and by black night doth take away, / Death's second self, that seals up all in rest." This is the peculiarly inflected imagery of light with which the young man's poet assimilates to his own poetic psychology the self-consuming

logic of "Spending again what is already spent," for it is with this imagery of after-light that the poet makes his own poetic introspection into something retrospective:

In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,  
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie  
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,  
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by. (73)

In terms of what we can think of as the conventional visual imagery of the poetry of praise, it is as though in Shakespeare's sonnets to the young man *Ideas Mirror* had now become the "glass" of sonnet 62, a "glass," however, that rather horrifyingly "shows me myself indeed, / Beated and chopp'd with tann'd antiquity," with the subjective consequence of this for the poet being that, as sonnet 62 goes on to say, "Mine own self-love quite contrary I read."

There is much more that might be said about this imagery of tired light, or tired imagery of light, for it can be argued that such imagery not only determines the young man's poet's sense of space and time, but also his erotic sensibility as well (consider, for example, "A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass" [5]). As it is, however, it seems clear that we cannot overlook—as sentimental readings often do—the novel coloring that Shakespeare's young man sonnets give to their visual imagery, to their imagery of the visual, for this is responsible, to a considerable degree, for the pathos of poetic persona that these sonnets regularly exhibit. By the same token, however, it would be a mistake to overemphasize this darkness that informs these sonnets' literary, visionary light. If the young man sonnets are suspicious of their visual imagery, this is not a suspicion that they put directly into words. Quite the contrary, whatever reservations attach to the young man sonnets' imagery of vision, these reservations, like those that shade the poet's various characterizations of the ideality of the young man, are implicit rather than explicit, something we read between what the young man sonnets call their "eternal lines to time" (18).

It is important to insist upon this indirection, upon the fact that the young man sonnets do not explicitly speak against their light, because this accounts for the residual idealism with which the young man sonnets always turn, heliotropically, to "that sun, thine eye" (49). At least ideally, the young man sonnets would like to be like the courtly "marigold" of sonnet 25, whose "fair leaves spread . . . at the sun's eye." Like such flowers of fancy, the young man sonnets would like to look exactly like the ideal that they look at, just as the poet would like his "I" to be "as you were when first your eye I ey'd" (104). Hence the nostalgia of the poet's introspection: the poet sees his difference from an eternal visionary sameness, his difference from a visionary poetics that would always be the same because, as Aristotle says of metaphor, it always "see(s) the same." But this insight serves

only to make the poet's ideal bygone vision seem all the more ideal, an image of poetic presence that is always in the past, even when this ancient past is the present in the future tense, as in the prospective retrospection of sonnet 104, where the poet tells "thou age unbred: / Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead." This loyally retrospective visuality, a poetry of re-turn rather than of turn, accounts for the complex texture of the young man sonnets' imagery of vision, a complexity that derives from the fact that the young man sonnets never entirely reject the ideality from which they are estranged. If the young man sonnets characteristically distance themselves from their visual imagery even as they employ it, this distanciation possesses poetic force precisely to the extent that such imagery of light continues to retain, specifically in retrospect, at a distance, its originary and traditionary ideal connotations.

I stress the vestigial power of such visual ideality in the young man sonnets, its "present-absent" (45) presence, because this both measures and prepares for the difference between the sonnets addressed to the young man and those addressed to the dark lady. As is well known, in the subsequence of sonnets addressed to the dark lady such ideal imagery of light is explicitly—Shakespeare's word here is important—"forsworn" (152). What gives this "forswearing" its power, however, and what distinguishes it, tonally as well as thematically, from the implicit visual reservations informing the sonnets addressed to the young man, is the way the dark lady's poet puts these heretofore unspoken visionary suspicions directly into words. In the young man sonnets, the young man, whatever his faults, is an "image" whose idealization effectively can represent an ideal that is lost, as in sonnet 31: "Their images I lov'd I view in thee, / And thou (all they) hast all the all of me," or the young man is a "shadow" who to the poet's "imaginary sight . . . makes black night beauteous, and her old face new" (27). In contrast, in the dark lady sonnets, though as something that is more complicated and more unsettling than a simple opposition, the dark lady has the "power," as in sonnet 149, "To make me give the lie to my true sight, / And swear that brightness doth not grace the day."

We broach here what is often called the anti-Petrarchanism of the sonnets to the dark lady, and it is certainly the case that the dark lady sonnets regularly characterize their literary peculiarity and novelty in terms of the way they differ from the specular ideality of a previous Petrarchist poetics. When the poet looks at the young man, he sees "That sun, thine eye" (49). In contrast, when he looks at the dark lady, what he sees is the way she is unlike the ideal brightness of the young man: "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" (130). On the face of it, this amounts to a straightforward difference, for, on the one hand, there is brightness, whereas, on the other, there is darkness. What makes this difference complicated, however, is that when the poet makes an issue of it, when he gives explicit expression to it, he presents the darkness of the lady as itself the image

of this difference, as an image, precisely, of the difference between the black that it is and the light that it is not.

This is why the difference between the lady's stressedly unconventional darkness and the young man's emphatically conventional brightness produces something that is both more and less than a straightforward black and white antithesis of the kind suggested by the "anti-" of anti-Petrarchanism. On the one hand, there is brightness, but, on the other, is a darkness that, in a peculiar or what Troilus calls a "bi-fold" way, is both these hands together both at once.<sup>11</sup> Such is the strangeness of a lady whom the poet alternately praises and blames for being other than what at first sight she appears. As an image of that which she is not, the lady is presented as the likeness of a difference, at once a version of, but at the same time a perversion of, that to which she is, on the one hand, both positively and negatively compared, and that to which she is, on the other, both positively and negatively opposed. For this reason, as she is presented, the lady is, strictly speaking, beyond both comparison and opposition. The lady both is and is not what she is, and because she is in this way, *in* herself, something double, the lady cannot be comprehended by a poetics of "To one, of one, still such, and ever so." As the poet puts it in sonnet 130—this the consequence of the fact that his "mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun"—the lady is a "love," just as she inspires a "love," that is "as rare, / As any she belied with false compare." The irrational ratio of the formula defines the peculiarity of the lady. She is a "she" who is logically, as well as grammatically, both subject and object of "belied with false compare," comparable, therefore, only to the way comparison has failed.

From the beginning, this effective doubleness of the lady, defined in specifically literary terms, i.e., in terms of a new kind of poetics, is what the poet finds distinctive about her, as in the first sonnet he addresses to her:

In the old age black was not counted fair,  
Or if it were it bore not beauty's name;  
But now is black beauty's successive heir,  
And beauty slander'd with a bastard shame. (127)

What we are supposed to recognize here as officially surprising is that the lady's traditional foul is now characterized as something that is fair, just as in later sonnets this novel fair will be yet more surprisingly foul: "For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright, / Who art as black as hell, as dark as night" (147). In either case, however, whether fair or foul, it is always as images of that which they are not, as something double, fair *and* foul, as something duplicitous and heterogeneous, that the lady and her darkness acquire their erotic and their literary charge.

Thus "black" is "now" "beauty's successive heir," now that "beauty" is "slander'd with a bastard shame." In the context of the sequence as a whole, the force

of this unconventional "succession" is that it repeats, but with a difference, the themes of reiterated and legitimately procreated likeness with reference to which the young man at the opening of his subsequence is supposed, as an *imago*, to "prove his beauty by succession thine" (2): "Die single, and thine image dies with thee" (3). Instead of the ideal multiplication of kind with kind, the ongoing reproduction of the visual same, by means of which the young man is supposed to "breed another thee" (6)—a breeding implicitly associated in the young man sonnets with a kind of homosexual usury: "that use is not forbidden usury" (6)—the novel beauty of the lady instead exemplifies a novelly miscegenating "successivity"—novel *because* successive to such Platonized "succession"—whereby black becomes the differential substitute, the unkind "heir," of what is "fair."<sup>12</sup> So too with the blackness of the lady's "raven" eyes, a darkness that replaces at the same time as it thus displaces the brightness it sequentially succeeds:

Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black,  
Her eyes so suited and they mourners seem  
At such who, not born fair, no beauty lack,  
Slandering creation with a false esteem. (127)

This, in little, defines the structural and temporal relationship of the dark lady sonnets to the young man sonnets. The second subsequence is a repetition of the first, but it is a discordant and a disturbing repetition because the latter subsequence, stressing itself as a repetition, represents the former (as also the former's themes of visionary presence—"So either by thy picture or my love / Thyself away are present still with me" [47])—in such a way that its memorial repetition explicitly calls up the poignant absence of that which it recalls. To the degree that this articulates the silent reservations that darken the idealism of the young man sonnets, to this extent we register the way in which the "black" of the second subsequence is continuous with the elegiacally retrospective visuality of the first. Yet there is also an emphatic difference between the two, a difference that derives precisely from the fact that the dark lady's poet explicitly expresses what the young man's poet preferred to leave implicit. For what the dark lady's poet sees in the darkness of the lady's mourning eyes is the death of ideal visionary presence; her darkness is for him an image or *imago* of the loss of vision. But, according to the poet, it is this very vision of the loss of vision that now thrusts him into novel speech—the discourse of "black beauty"—making him now no longer a poet of the eye, but, instead, a poet of the tongue: "Yet so they mourn, becoming of their woe, / That every tongue says beauty should look so" (127).

As Ulysses says of wanton Cressida, therefore, "There's language in her eye."<sup>13</sup> But what is odd about this language is what is odd about the lady's eye, namely, that it is opposed to vision. The difference between this and the way that language is characterized in the young man sonnets is, of course, considerable, and we may



say that this difference at once examples and defines the novelty of the way a poet speaks in a post-Petrarchist poetics. In the young man sonnets the poet ideally speaks a visionary speech, and therefore, when he speaks about this speech he speaks of it as something of the eye: "O, learn to read what silent love hath writ: / To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit" (23). In contrast, but again as something that is more complicated than a simple opposition, the poet in the dark lady subsequence will speak about his speech *as* speech, and as something that, for just this very reason, is different from a visual ideal. It is in this "for-swearing" way that the dark lady, with the "pow'r" of her "insufficiency," will "make me give the lie to my true sight, / And swear that brightness doth not grace the day" (150). The double way the lady looks is like the double way that language speaks, which is why, for example, when the poet looks at the lady's far too common "common place" (137), a place that is at once erotic and poetic, he tells us how "mine eyes seeing this, say this is not" (137).

Thematized in this way, as something radically discrepant to the truth of ideal vision, as the *voice* of "eyes . . . which have no correspondence with true sight" (148), language is regularly presented in the dark lady sonnets as something whose truth consists not only in saying, but in *being*, something false: "My thoughts and my discourse as madman's are, / At random from the truth vainly express'd: / For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright, / Who art as black as hell, as dark as night" (147). Correspondingly, because no longer something visual, because no longer the iconic likeness or the *eidōlon* of what it speaks about, verbal language now defines itself as its forswearing difference from what is "Fair; 'kind; and 'true": "For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness, / Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy, / And to enlighten thee gave eyes to blindness, / Or made them swear against the thing they see" (152). And, as a further and more personal result, the poet now identifies himself with the difference that his language thus bespeaks. He is no longer a visionary poet who identifies his "I" and "eye." Instead, *because* he speaks, the poet comes to inhabit the space of difference between poetic language and poetic vision, a difference generated *by* the speech he speaks. The poet's subjectivity, his "I," is precipitated in or as the slippage between his eye and tongue. The poet becomes, in the phrase I take as title for this paper, the subject of a "perjur'd eye": "For I have sworn thee fair: more perjur'd eye, / To swear against the truth so foul a lie!" (152).

It is fair to say, therefore, that in the dark lady sonnets we encounter a poetics in which true vision is captured by false language, and that the conflict thus engendered—between sight and word, between being and meaning, between poetic presentation and poetic representation—in turn determines specific variations on, or mutations of, traditional sonneteering claims and motifs. A poetics of verbal re-presentation, stressing the repetition of the *re-*, spells the end of the poetics of visual presentation, thereby constituting the Idea of poetic presence

as something that is lost. To the extent that this is the case, Shakespeare's sonnet sequence marks a decisive moment in the history of lyric, for when the dark lady sonnets forswear the ideally visionary poetics of the young man sonnets, when poetic language comes in this way to be characterized as something verbal, not visual, we see what happens to poetry when it gives over a perennial poetics of *ut pictura poesis* for (literally, *so as to speak*) a poetics of *ut poesis poesis*, a transition that writes itself out in Shakespeare's sonnets as an unhappy progress from a poetry based on visual likeness—whose adequation to that which it admires is figured by a “wondrous scope” by means of which “One thing expressing, leaves out difference” (105)—to a poetry based on verbal difference—whose inadequate relation to that which it bespeaks is figured by an “insufficiency” that “make(s) me give the lie to my true sight” (150). In the sequence as a whole, this progress from a homogeneous poetics of vision to a heterogeneous poetics of language is fleshed out as a progress from an ideally homosexual desire, however conflicted, for what is “‘Fair,’ ‘kind,’ and ‘true’ ” to a frankly misogynistic, heterosexual desire for what is fair *and* unfair, kind *and* unkind, true *and* false—a progress, in other words, from man to woman. Here again, however, it is explicitly and literally as a figure *of* speech that the lady becomes the novel “hetero-” opposed as such to an ideal and a familiar Neo-Platonic “homo-,” as when: “When my love swears that she is made of truth, / I do believe her though I know she lies” (138). It is in this way, by making each the figure of the other, that the poet collates his corrupting Eros with his corrupting Logos. When the poet “credit[s] her false-speaking tongue,” the result is that “On both sides thus is simple truth suppress’d” (138). But the consequence of this false correspondence, of this traducement of the Cratylism of the poetry of praise—e.g., of the “beatitudinizing” power of Dante’s “Beatrice,” or of the self-applauding circularities of Petrarch’s puns on “Laura,” “laud,” and “laurel”—is that the poet comes to express, in terms of a specific desire of language, the novel duplicity of a specifically linguistic language of desire: “Therefore I lie with her, and she with me, / And in our faults by lies we flattered be” (138).

Again there is more that might be said about the way the dark lady sonnets thematize their lady’s and their poet’s speech as speech, and draw from this the moral that such speech is radically excessive to an orthodox poetics of admiration. As with the implicit reservations that inform the young man sonnets’ visionary themes, it would be possible to show how Shakespeare’s explicitly paradoxical version of a traditionary poetics of praise not only affects the poet’s expressions of desire—leading him from a homosexual desire for that which is admired to a heterosexual desire for that which is not admired—but, again, his sense of space and time as well. If we could follow this out in sufficient detail we would develop a more textured phenomenology of the psychology of the Shakespearean subject. This would help not only to describe the ways in which poetic person

or lyric subjectivity in Shakespeare's sonnet sequence is altogether foreign to the kind of poetic person we find in first-person poetry up through the Renaissance, but also to explain why this novel Shakespearean subjectivity—not only as it appears in Shakespeare's first-person sonnets but also as it manifests itself in Shakespeare's zero-person plays—subsequently becomes (since Shakespeare, which is to say since the decisive conclusion of an epideictic poetics, which is to say since the end of a poetic tradition in which all poetry is a poetry of praise) the dominant and canonical version in our literary tradition of literary subjectivity *per se*.

For obvious reasons an essay is not the place to develop the details of such an account, an account that necessarily calls for all the particularity and specificity of extended practical and historical literary criticism.<sup>14</sup> However, for the sake of an outline of such an account, one point seems especially important: namely, that this novel Shakespearean subjectivity, for all its difference from that which it succeeds, is nevertheless constrained by the traditionary lyric literariness to which it stands as epitaph. In this sense, we might say that “poor Petrarch's long deceased woes” exert a posthumous power, prescribing in advance the details of their own forswearing. This point, too, can only be developed here in a schematic and perfunctory fashion. But it is possible, by looking at the way the dark lady's poet revises the visionary logic and psychologic of the young man's poet's eye and heart, to get some sense of the way Shakespeare's paradoxical invention of a heterogeneous and heterosexual poetics of paradoxical praise amounts to an orthodox mutation of a conventionally homogeneous and homosexual poetics of orthodox idealization:

Thine eyes I love, and they as pitying me,  
 Knowing my heart torment me with disdain,  
 Have put on black, and loving mourners be,  
 Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.  
 And truly not the morning sun of heaven  
 Better becomes the grey cheeks of th' east,  
 Nor that full star that ushers in the even  
 Doth half that glory to the sober west,  
 As those two mourning eyes become thy face.  
 O, let it then as well beseem thy heart  
 To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace,  
 And suit thy pity like in every part.  
 Then will I swear beauty herself is black,  
 And all they foul that thy complexion lack.

As in sonnets 46 and 47, the general conceit of sonnet 123, with its frustrated lover addressing his pitiless, disdainful beloved, is a Petrarchan commonplace, going back beyond Petrarch to the *rime petrose* of Arnaut Daniel. Equally common is the intricate development of the imagery of sympathetically erotic vision. In

this sense we deal here with the same poetics Shakespeare presupposes in the young man sonnets, where, for example, he can speak familiarly of “that sun, thine eye” (49) precisely because a long-standing tradition of metaphysical and sexual allegory authorizes an iconographic equating of the two. On the other hand, but in an equally insistent way, sonnet 132 further plays upon this convention and these traditional light-sight metaphors when, as a result of comparing the beloved’s eyes to the sun, it turns out not that her eyes are lamps, but that the sun to which they are compared is therefore black. This too is, in part, conventional (e.g., Stella’s eyes are black), but what concerns us is the stressed contrast to what has come before. In the young man sonnets the morning is “sacred,” “new-appearing” (7), “golden” and “green” (33). Here, instead, “the morning sun of heaven” is obscuring complement to “the grey cheeks of the east,” shining in the morning like the evening star at night, because it is a brightness in an encroaching darkness of which it is itself the cause and sign. Where in the sonnets addressed to the young man the sun is a “gracious light” (7) to the morning, here, instead, the morning is a “mourning” whose inversion is a darkening “grace”; “Since mourning doth thee grace.” This pun on “mo[u]rning,” which explains why in the dark lady sonnets “brightness doth not grace the day,” is the kind of motivated homophone that Shakespeare is often either faulted or appreciated for, either the sort for which, in Johnson’s phrase, he threw away the world, or the sort with which he generates the resonant ambiguities that critics like to list. The point that is emphasized by the sonnet, however, is that the pun, which must be noticed as such for it to work its poetic effect, does in little what the poem does rhetorically as a whole: repeating itself *in* itself so as to undo itself with its own echo, discovering and producing its own loss at the very moment of calling to our attention the way language, theme, and image displace themselves by folding over upon themselves in paradox. So too, this is precisely the mourning paradox of what is epideictically orthodox for which the poem will sadly say that it was written: “Then will I swear beauty herself is black, / And all they foul that thy complexion lack.”

In obvious ways, therefore, all this—morning *and* melancholia—results in something that is much more complex than a simple negation of Petrarchan themes and images, and for this reason the poem possesses a tonality unlike even the most self-consciously witty Petrarchan lovers’ complaint. The system of logical oppositions and conventional antitheses into which we might be tempted to organize the sonnet’s courtly courtship argument falls to pieces as soon as the sonnet brings antithesis into play. Just as the lady’s eyes by turning black express a pity occasioned by her heart’s disdain, so too does the poet here thematize the fact that he here expresses his heart’s desire with a language of disdain. In the same way that the stain of the lady’s eyes is both image of and answer to the disdain of her heart, so too does the poet here amplify the lady’s beauty by fouling the

conventional images of fairness. The relationship between the lady's eye and the lady's heart, or of the poet to the lady, is a matter, therefore, neither of similarity and contrast nor of pity and disdain, and, for this reason, there is no way either poet or lady might "suit thy pity like in every part." Pity is a figure of disdain just as morning is a version of the night, each of them the homeopathic mirror of the heteropathy of the other. As a result, with likeness emerging as the instance, rather than the antithesis, of difference, with pity the *complement* to disdain, the sonnet forces its reader to deal with oddly asymmetrical oppositions whereby each polarized side or half of every opposition that the sonnet adduces already includes, and therefore changes by encapsulating, the larger dichotomy of which it is a part. With regard to the lady, this means that she cannot treat the poet either with pity or with disdain, or even with an oxymoronic combination of the two. For her "charm" consists precisely of the way these two apparently antithetical modalities, empathy and antipathy, each turn out to be, within their singular propriety, the contrary double not only of its other but also of itself, the two together thus composing a double doubling whose reduplicating logic forecloses the possibility of ever isolating either modality in itself. With regard to the poet, this means that he cannot speak of his lady with a simple rhetoric of similarity and contrast, for his language undercuts the logic of likeness and difference even as it advances complementary contrarities.<sup>15</sup>

The difference between this and what happens when sonnets 46 and 47 develop their eye-heart topos is pointed enough, a difference now that *makes* a difference. Where the two young man sonnets see both eye and heart as each the figure and occasion of the other, sonnet 132 instead both literally and figuratively describes a desire at odds with itself because at odds with what it sees. Where the two young man sonnets bring out the syncretic identity built into their differences, the dark lady sonnet instead brings out the diacritical difference built into its identities. Where the two young man sonnets develop an ideal logic of sympathetic opposition, the dark lady sonnet gives us instead what is the paradoxical opposite, if we can call it that, to such a logic of sympathetic opposition. In terms of form, of theme, of tone, these are all significant differences. But it is important to realize that these differences derive not only their force but also their specific qualities, their content as well as their contours, from the structurally systematic way in which sonnet 132 understands its language paradoxically to redouble, with a difference, the orthodox dual unities with which it begins—i.e., from the way in which the double doubling of sonnet 132 tropes, re-turns, re-verses, the unifying tropes of an idealizing, homogeneous poetics, in this way inverting the reciprocal way that eye and heart in sonnets 46 and 47 "each doth good turns now unto the other" (47). "Mourning" its "morning," the sonnet puts into words, literally puts *into* words, the duplicity of its speech, and

this duplicity, thus bespoken, in turn divides the original bright desire and golden poetics presupposed by the young man sonnets. By means of this remarked duplication, the sonnet undoes both erotic and rhetorical identification, and thereby, *through* its language, justifies the chiasmic inversion of the poet's eye and heart. In sonnet 132 the content of "mourning" is the loss of "morning," and this hole built into a double language, this difference sounded in a sameness, is what functions both to blind the poet's eye and to break the poet's heart. Developed in this way, as the forswearing double of a visual ideal, as "morning" *manqué*, language acquires in the sonnet, and at the same time also proclaims, its novel motives and motifs, precisely those that the poet defines, logically and psychologically, as "Then will I swear beauty herself is black."

It is language, therefore, conceived and conceited as something linguistic, as something of the *tongue*, as both like and unlike the vision to which it is opposed and on which it is superimposed, that in the dark lady sonnets describes and names the redoubling of unity that leads to division, the mimic likeness of a likeness that leads to difference, the representation of presentation that spells the end of presence. Writing at or as the conclusion of a tradition of poetic idealism and idealization, when poetic imitation no longer functions as *Ideas Mirrour*, when poetic metaphor no longer "see(s) the same," Shakespeare in his sonnets draws the formal and thematic consequences that follow from the death of visual admiration. In the poetics of the sequence as a whole, at the level of its rhetorical figures, the dark lady sonnets explicitly break the amatory metaphors of "Two distincts, division none" (*The Phoenix and the Turtle*) by substituting for such a unitary duality a tropic system of triangular, chiasmic duplicity: "A torment thrice threefold thus to be crossed" (133). In the narrative the sequence tells, this figural double duplication, which brings out the difference built into binary identities, is thematically embodied in the ambiguously duplicitous dark lady—darker and older, almost by structural necessity, than the fair young man—and then projected into the double cuckoldry story itself, where the poet is betrayed by both his objects of desire when they couple or cross-couple with each other, and when the sequence as a whole moves from the unity of *folie à deux* to the duality of *ménage à trois*. In terms of the sonnets' own literary self-consciousness, there is an analogous contrast, again thematic, between the traditional poetry of erotic idealization addressed to the young man and the parodic undoing of that tradition by means of the radically *para-*, not *anti-*, Petrarchanism addressed to the dark lady, which repeats, but with a difference, the "sameness" of traditional idealizing themes. Finally, because the self-conscious tradition of the poetry of praise assumes that the language of poetic desire is itself identical to the object of poetic desire—which is why an orthodox poetry of love characteristically writes itself out as a love of poetry—Shakespeare's paradoxical version of the poetry of

praise brings out even the difference built into the identity of literary and sexual admiration, which is how the dark lady sonnets describe a poetic desire whose Eros and Logos are themselves thematically out of joint.

It would be possible, of course, to find literary precedents for what seems novel in Shakespeare's sonnets. The kind of chiasmic (not oxymoronic) figurality that governs so many of Shakespeare's sonnets, the darksome light of the young man sonnets and their conflicted response to idealism, the general sense of literary belatedness that runs through the sequence as a whole—such features are already present in Dante, and they are yet more insistently and urgently emphatic in Petrarch, where the intractably heterogeneous relation of poetic signifier to poetic signified defines, to some extent, the central worry of the "scattered" songs to Laura. (In *The Secretum*, Petrarch's private and unpublished imaginary dialogue with Saint Augustine, Augustine accuses Petrarch of having fallen in love with Laura *only* on account of her name). So too, we could readily trace the way the Renaissance sonnet grows increasingly arch in its presentation of the Cratylitic correspondence of signifier to signified. This archness develops in so smooth and continuous a way as to suggest an unbroken line linking Beatrice, through Laura, through Stella (and through others) to, finally, what Shakespeare in several voluptuary sonnets calls his "Will."<sup>16</sup> So too, we could correlate the development of such literary self-consciousness with the increasingly intentional artificiality of the later "golden" sonnet, the way such sonnets strive, quite frankly, to present the conventionally reflexive reflections of orthodox epideixis as something *merely* literary, for prime example, the over-written way that Astrophil looks deep into his heart and in this way underwrites his introspective astrophilia. Even more obviously, we could find in the Renaissance vogue for the mock encomium, in the widespread enthusiasm for comically paradoxical praises of that which is low, not only the hyper-rhetorical temperament that Shakespeare's sonnets presuppose, but, also, a regularly reiterated interest in the specific themes that Shakespeare develops in the sonnets to the dark lady—e.g., the paradoxical praise of blindness, darkness, nymphomania, cuckoldry, false language, and so forth.<sup>17</sup>

The existence of such precedents is evidence of the fact that what Shakespeare "invents" in his sonnets is what he "comes upon" in a literary tradition and a literary history of which he is well aware and to which his sonnets are, again in a conventional way, intended as response. Yet it is important to recognize the genuine novelty that Shakespeare introduces into this literary tradition when he puts into words, as I have put it, his suspicions—truly, *sub-spiciere*—of the visual and visionary poetics of idealism. For when Shakespeare thus outspokenly articulates, thematically as well as formally, the "insufficiency" that "make[s] me give the lie to my true sight" (150), when he makes his language literally as well as figuratively "mourn" the "morning," he manages, on the one hand, to render explicit reservations that in the orthodox Renaissance sonnet are serious but

always implicit, just as, on the other, he manages to take seriously what in the tradition of the paradoxical mock encomium is explicit but always merely comic. He can do so because the thematic innovation has more than thematic consequence. By “expressing” the “difference” that the idealizing and homogeneous Renaissance sonnet necessarily “leaves out,” the peculiar matter of Shakespearean paradox finds itself instantiated, exemplified, by the corresponding paradox of Shakespearean poetic manner. Language thus speaks *for* its own gainsaying. The result is a new kind of Cratylism, a second degree of Cratylism, that, like the Liar’s Paradox Shakespeare often flirts with in his sonnets—“Those lines that I before have writ do lie” (115), “When my love swears that she is made of truth” (138)—is proof of its own paradoxicality. In this gainsaying way—a speech acquired on condition that it speak against itself—Shakespeare accomplishes a limit case of the correspondence of signifier to signified. As the self-belying likeness of a difference, language becomes in Shakespeare’s sonnets the true icon of an idol. Shakespeare’s poetics of the word in this way acquires the “power” of its “insufficiency” (150), for every word the poet speaks effectively presents, is demonstration of, the loss of his ideal.<sup>18</sup>

With regard to Shakespearean subjectivity, two points follow from this, one practical, the other theoretical. First of all, the poet who speaks such a “forswearing” speech is no longer the speaking “eye” of the traditional sonnet. As a result, the poetic persona of Shakespeare’s sonnets can no longer elaborate his subjectivity in accord with the ideal model of a self composed of the specular identification of poetic ego and poetic ego-ideal, of “I” and “you,” or of eye and eyed. Instead, identifying himself with the heterogeneous look of the lady, or with the duplicity of her speech, the poet identifies himself with difference, with that which resists or breaks identification. The result is that the poet’s identity is defined, by chiasmic triangulation, as the disruption or fracture of identity: “Me from myself thy cruel eye hath taken, / And my next self thou harder hast engrossed” (133). In terms of poetic erotics, we can say that this is why the poet of Shakespeare’s sonnet sequence possesses a doubly divided desire—“Two loves I have of comfort and despair” (144)—and why the one is purchased dialectically, measure for measure, at the expense of the other, as “Th’ expense of spirit in a waste of shame” (129). Speaking more generally, we can say that such a poetic self identifies himself with an inescapable, because constitutive, “insufficiency.” Built up on or out of the loss of itself, its identity defined as its difference from itself, a hole opens up within the whole of poetic first-person self-presence. This “hole” within the “whole” (and also without, see sonnet 134: “He pays the whole, and yet am I not free”) inserts into the poet a space of personal interiority, a palpable syncope, that justifies and warrants poetic introspection. This accounts for the strong personal affect of Shakespeare’s lyric persona, what is called its “depth.” By joining the rhetorical form of triangular chiasmus to the thematic



heartbreak of a "perjur'd eye" (a phrase that, for this reason, we can think of as a "Shakespeareme," i.e., the smallest minimal unit of Shakespearean self), Shakespeare's sonnets give off the subjectivity effect called for by a post-idealist literariness. This is also how Shakespeare produces subjectivity in his plays, where, to take a simple example, the cross-coupling of pairs of lovers, their "star-cross'd" fate regularly explained in terms of a thematic disjunction between vision and language, characteristically generates what are taken to be Shakespeare's deeply realized, psychologically authentic, dramatic personae. Moreover, to the extent that the characterologies of these characters continue to retain their specifically characterological or subjective appeal, to this extent we have evidence of the abiding, though posthumous, power of the idealism and the idealization to which the logic of their unhappy psychologies attest—an ideality all the more powerful for being constituted retrospectively, as a "remembrance of things past," as "th' expense of many a vanish'd sight," as a "fore-bemoaned moan," "Which I new pay as if not paid before" (30).

This leads, however, to a concluding theoretical observation. It has no doubt already been noticed that this reading of Shakespeare's sonnets, perfunctory as it is, has many affinities with various literary theories that have been labeled, somewhat simplistically, Structuralist and Post-Structuralist. My concern with the way the "linguageness" of language is stressed by Shakespeare's sonnets is related to accounts of literariness that have been developed by such formalists as Roman Jakobson, Gérard Genette, Michael Riffaterre. My concern with cross-coupling chiasmus is related in very obvious ways to A. J. Greimas's "semantic square," to Paul De Man's discussions of figural chiasmus, and also to Jacques Lacan's "Schema L," which Lacan draws as a quaternary "Z." So too, my discussion of the way in which an idealist homogeneity is disrupted by a supplementary heterogeneity is in many ways like, and is certainly indebted to, Jacques Derrida's various essays in deconstructive phenomenology. Most obviously and most importantly, my account of a subjectivity precipitated by the paradoxical relationship of language to vision, my understanding of a language of desire and a desire of language, is very much influenced by Lacan's psychoanalytic account of what he calls the capture of the Imaginary by what he calls the Symbolic.

It is possible to recognize, therefore, a considerable overlap between certain contemporary literary, and not only literary, theorizations and both the formal and thematic peculiarities of Shakespeare's "perjur'd eye." This suggests either that Shakespeare was very theoretically acute or, instead, that contemporary theory is itself very Shakespearean. However, before choosing between either of these alternatives, we should recall the fact that contemporary literary theory, as it has thought itself out, has enacted a development very similar not only to the development we can discern in Shakespeare's sonnets as they move from the sonnets addressed to the young man to those addressed to the dark lady, but

similar also to the larger literary development within which we can locate the historical significance of Shakespeare's sonnet sequence as a whole. Responding to Husserl's Dantesque phenomenology of *Ideas*, to Husserl's concern with eidetic reduction and a transcendental Ego, Sartre developed a psychology of imagination whose logic and metaphors very much resemble the paranoid visionary thematics of a good many of Shakespeare's sonnets to the young man. The subjective optics of the Sartrian "gaze" and its melodrama of mutually persecutory master-slave relations subsequently receives in the thought of Merleau-Ponty, especially in late works such as *Le Visible et l'Invisible*, an ironically comic revision whose chiasmic marriage of subject and object is reminiscent of more than a few of Shakespeare's most genuinely poignant sonneteering conceits; it was Merleau-Ponty, after all, who introduced "chiasmus" into contemporary critical discourse, as a way to explain the way Cézanne paints the trees watching Cézanne.<sup>19</sup> Lacan, Merleau-Ponty's friend, broke with Merleau-Ponty on just this point, seeing in the fully lived "flesh" and "visibility" of Merleau-Ponty's chiasmus a psychological and a phenomenological sentimentality. Instead, Lacan developed an account of the way subjectivity is born in the place where chiasmus breaks. Lacan's anamorphic "gaze," very different from "*le regard*" of Sartre or of Merleau-Ponty, along with Lacan's account of the way language potentiates and inherits this rupture of the imaginary, rather perfectly repeats the formal as well as the thematic logic of Shakespeare's "perjur'd eye."<sup>20</sup> So too, Derrida's attempt to rupture this rupture, Derrida's putatively post-subjective account of a supplemental *différance*, seems, from the point of view of Shakespeare's sonnets, nothing but another "increase" that "From fairest creatures we desire" (1), assuming we recognize the wrinkle, literally the "crease," that Shakespeare introduces into the perennial poetics of copious "increase."

This is significant because it raises the possibility that current thought works to transfer into a theoretical register a constellated set of literary themes, metaphors, motifs, that Shakespeare introduces into literature, in response to specific literary exigencies, at and as the beginning of the end of the Humanist Renaissance. If so, it is possible that current theorizations are important not because they offer a method or even a point of view with which to look back at Shakespeare, but, instead, because they participate in the very same literary history within which Shakespeare writes his sonnets, emerging now as a symptomatic and epiphenomenal consequence of the way, at the beginning of the modernist epoch, Shakespeare rethinks the literature he succeeds. Putting the question more strongly, we can ask whether, repeating Shakespeare's repetition, it is possible for contemporary theory to do so with a difference.

These are not questions I mean fully either to answer or even to address in this essay. But I would like at least to raise them, for it seems important that such a sense of repetition is itself a distinctive mark of Renaissance sensibility, especially

of a good many literary minds for whom the project of their present is to give rebirth to the past. The very great Humanist Leone Ebreo—precursor to Spinoza, and in this way an important influence on Freud—in his dialogue *D'amore e desiderio* distinguishes—the topic is an old one—between love and desire on the grounds that love is an emotion one feels for that which one possesses, whereas desire is the emotion one feels for that which one does not possess.<sup>21</sup> Returning to the subject sometime later, in a dialogue called *De l'origine d'amore*, Ebreo emends his original distinction, reformulating it on the grounds that even that which one possesses, because it is possessed in transient time, carries with it, even at the moment of possession, a sense of loss.<sup>22</sup> This possession of loss, an emotion which is half love and half desire—what we might call a desire for love, but what we cannot call a love of desire—grows increasingly strong when the later and post-Humanist Renaissance returns to rethink a good many other topics relating to the origin of love. In time, in Shakespeare's sonnets, the rebirth of the Renaissance turns into the death of remorse, for in Shakespeare's sonnets "desire is death" (147) *because* "now is black beauty's successive heir" (127).<sup>23</sup>

It is because this is so central a theme in them, because they fully realize their *re-*, that Shakespeare's sonnets possess more than merely local interest. In Shakespeare's sonnets we hear how a literature of repetition, rather than a literature *de l'origine*, explains its desire to itself. With regard to the matter of poetic person, this is important because it allows us to understand how Shakespeare's response to secondariness leads him to introduce into literature a subjectivity altogether novel in the history of the lyric, or, as Shakespeare puts it, "Since mind at first in character was done" (59). For this very reason, however, the constitution of Shakespearean poetic self necessarily recalls the imperatives of a literariness larger even than the Shakespearean:

If there be nothing new, but that which is  
Hath been before, how are our brains beguil'd  
Which laboring for invention bear amiss  
The second burthen of a former child! (59)

"The second burthen of a former child" very well characterizes the subjectivity fathered in the late Renaissance by the burden of a belated literariness. There is good reason to compare the rebirth of this aborted subject that "invention bear(s) amiss" with "Death's second self, that seals up all in rest" (73). However, to the extent that it is not only Shakespeare who looks, as sonnet 59 puts it, "with a backward look," to see "Your image in some antique book," the revolutionary question raised by such Shakespearean retrospection will continue to retain the ongoing urgency of a perennial and, it seems fair to say, since even Shakespeare now is "nothing new," an increasingly important literary commonplace:

That I might see what the old world could say  
 To this composed wonder of your frame,  
 Whether we are mended, or whe'er better they,  
 Or whether revolution be the same.  
     O, sure I am the wits of former days  
     To subjects worse have given admiring praise. (59)

## Notes

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1. All Shakespeare references are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G.B. Evans, et al. (Boston, 1974). Sonnet numbers are indicated within parentheses.
2. See Lisle C. John, *The Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences: Studies in Conventional Conceits* (New York, 1938), pp. 93–95; J.H. Hanford, "The Debate of Eye and Heart," *Modern Language Notes*, 26:6 (1911), 161–65.
3. Petrarch, 174; compare to 86 and 87; references are to *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The Rime Sparse and other Lyrics*, ed. and trans. R.M. Durling (Cambridge, Mass., 1976). *Le Roman de la Rose*, ed. F. Lecoy (Paris, 1914), pp. 1684–87; see notes for background of the motif.
4. Dante, *Paradiso*, Canto 33, lines 91–131; references are to *Dante's Paradiso*, ed. and trans. John D. Sinclair (New York, 1977).
5. "Idea" is a sonneteering commonplace: J.W. Hebel, in his edition of *The Works of Michael Drayton* (Oxford, 1961) cites parallels in de Pontoux's *L'Idee*, in du Bellay, Desportes, Daniel; see vol. 5, p. 13. The Quarto prints "steeld"; Stephen Booth summarizes the range of connotations in *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (New Haven, 1977), pp. 172–73. The conflicting ensemble of motifs attaching to "steeld"—visual, metallic, inscriptive, all those also referring to "stolen" and to "styled"—themselves stage the tensions that sonnet 24 develops out of its general visual conceit, especially the sonnet's play on "perspective."
6. Simonides' saying is already a cliché for Plutarch, *De aud. poet.* 3. In *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (London, 1937), vol. 1, pp. 386–87, G.G. Smith cites the many Renaissance parallels. Aristotle, *Poetics* 1459a 5–8; "But the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars (*to gar eu metapherein to to homoion theōrein estin*)," *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry*, ed. and trans. I. Bywater (Oxford, 1909), p. 71.
7. "We beg you to tell us wherein this bliss of yours (*tua beatitudine*) now lies.' And I answered her by saying: 'In those words that praise my lady (In quelle parole che lodano la donna mia)' . . . Therefore I resolved that from now on I would choose material for my poems that should be in praise of this most gracious one." *La Vita nuova*, (XVIII), F. Chapelli, ed., *Opere di Dante Alighiere* (Milan, 1967); M. Musa, trans., *La Vita Nuova of Dante Alighieri* (Bloomington, Ind., 1965). Acting on this resolve, Dante composes the first canzone of *La Vita Nuova*, "Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore," which later, in *Purg.* 24, 49–63, in conversation with Buonagiunta, will be remem-

bered as marking the beginning of "*le nove rime*" of the "*dolce stil nuovo*." For Petrarch's puns on "Laura," see, for example, *Rime Sparse*, 5, 6, 7, 194, 196, 246, 327, 356.

8. Because the sonnet begins as a poetry of erotic praise, and because praise is also a central thematic issue in the orthodox Renaissance sonnet, the genre is a particularly focused instance of the poetry of praise. This is a significant fact because from antiquity up through the Renaissance, praise or, more generally, the epideictic (praise or blame), is taken to be the master literary genre of literature as such, the single genre under which all other, more particular, literary genres are properly subsumed. This is the basis for the hierarchy of literary genres or "kinds" in Renaissance literary theory, a typology that goes back to Aristotle, who derived all poetry from primal, epideictic imitation: praise of the high and blame of the low. We can identify the idealist assumptions at stake here by recalling the fact that the only poetry Socrates allows into the republic is "praise of gods and virtuous men."

The epideictic bias of traditional poetics—e.g., reading the *Aeneid* as a praise of Aeneas—is usually understood to reflect a concern on the part of the theoreticians with the didactic function of the poetical and the rhetorical; this is to understand the poetical or rhetorical in terms of effective moral persuasion. There is a more formal reason, however, with which traditional poetic theory accounts for the generic importance of the epideictic. Epi-deictic or de-monstrative rhetoric is called such because it is a rhetoric of "show" and "showing forth." The Greek is *epideiknūnai*, "to show," "display"; in the middle voice, "to show off," "to display for oneself." The Indo-European root is *\*deik*, with variant *\*deig*, "to show," which gives Greek *dikē*, "justice," and the verb *deiknūnai*, "bring to light," "show forth," "represent," "portray," "point out," "show," leading to English "deictic," "paradigmatic," "apodeictic," etc. So too, *deiknūnai* is also closely related to *deikeilon*, "representation," "exhibition," "reflection," "image," "phantom," "sculpted figure."

Aristotle brings out the significance of this semantic field, the Heideggerean resonance of which is obvious enough, when he distinguishes epideictic rhetoric from the two other kinds, forensic and deliberative, on the grounds that in the former the audience serves as "observer" (*theōron*), whereas in the latter two the audience serves as "judge" (*kritēn*), *Rhetoric*, 1358b2. Aristotle's point, brought out by his distinguishing between a rhetoric addressed to vision and a rhetoric addressed to judgment, is that epideictic or demonstrative oratory, as distinct from the transparent language of the law courts or the assembly, is a rhetoric both of display and self-display, a spectacular speech that we "observe" precisely because its manner calls attention to itself, a pointing "there" that points ego-centrally to "here," an objective "showing" that amounts to a subjective "showing-off." This explains why the epi-deictic is an extraordinary, not an ordinary, language. The point could be put in more contemporary terms by recalling the way Jakobson defines the specifically literary function as that message which stresses itself as merely message. The Renaissance sonnet characteristically amplifies this formal circularity of the language of praise, its recursive reflexivity, through various psychologistic conceits all designed to demonstrate the correlation of admiring subject with admired object. The point to realize is that when Shakespeare gives over the poetry of praise, when he distances himself from a visionary poetics, he not only gives over the themes and imagery of a perennial poetics, but also gives over the semiosis of this profoundly orthodox (and structuralist) literariness.

For the visual imagery employed by Renaissance poetic theory, especially theory of epideixis, see O.B. Hardison Jr., *The Enduring Monument: A Study of the Idea of Praise in Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice* (Westport, Conn., 1962), pp. 51–67. For general background see R. Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery* (Chicago, 1947), chaps. 2, 3; R.W. Lee, “*Ut Pictura Poesis*: The Humanistic Theory of Painting,” *Art Bulletin* 22 (1940), 197–269; E.H. Gombrich, “*Icones Symbolicae*: The Visual Image in Neo-Platonic Thought,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11 (1948); R.J. Clements, “*Picta Poesis*: Literary and Humanistic Theory in Renaissance Emblem Books” (Rome, 1960).

9. Murray Krieger, “Poetic Presence and Illusion: Renaissance Theory and the Duplicity of Metaphor,” *Critical Inquiry* 5:4 (1979), 619.
10. *Astrophil and Stella*, No. 15.
11. *Troilus and Cressida*, V.2.144.
12. Dante puts homosexuals and usurers in the same circle of hell, on the grounds that they couple, for sterile profit, kind with kind. For a very plausible explanation of why Brunetto Latini is also included here, see Eugene Vance, “*Désir, rhétorique et texte*,” *Poétique* 42 (April, 1980), 137–55.
13. *Troilus and Cressida*, IV.5.55–57. With regard to the way Shakespeare represents Petrarchism in the plays, compare this with Longaville’s sonnet in *Love’s Labor’s Lost*: “Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye, / ‘Gainst whom the world cannot hold argument, / Persuade my heart to this false perjury” (IV.3. 58–60), or with Romeo’s “She speaks, yet she says nothing; what of that? / Her eye discourses, I will answer it,” *Romeo and Juliet*, 11.2.12–13.
14. I develop such an account in *Shakespeare’s Perjured Eye: The Invention of Poetic Subjectivity in Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (University of California Press, 1985); this contains a fuller account of visual metaphors in traditional poetics, especially the way such metaphors are employed in the literature of orthodox and paradoxical praise.
15. From Aristotle on, rhetoricians regularly identify comparison as the distinctive, characteristic trope of praise, this because comparison allows a speaker to amplify his referent. It is possible to double the two terms of a comparison so that the four terms thus produced stand to each other in a chiasmic relation. This is what happens to eye and heart in sonnet 132. This kind of chiasmic trope is especially characteristic of paradoxical, comic praises of that which is low, this because such paradoxical praises present themselves as mimic repetitions of orthodox praise. The technical term for this kind of reduplicating trope—tropes that break, by redoubling, the dual unities of metaphors that “see the same”—is *syneciosis*. Puttenham calls this the “cross-coupler,” and associates it with the erotic, unkind mixture of kinds: “Ye have another figure which me thinkes may well be called (not much swerving from his originall in sense) the *Crosse-couple*, because it takes me two contrary words, and tieth them as it were in a paire of couples, and so makes them agree like good fellowes, as I saw once in Fraunce a wolfe coupled with a mastiffe, and a foxe with a hounde,” in George Puttenham, *The Arte of Englishe Poesie* (1589), facsimile reproduction (Kent, Ohio, 1970), p. 216.
16. With their puns on “Will” the dark lady sonnets render explicit a good deal of what is left implicit in the young man sonnets. To begin with, the dark lady sonnets play on the fact that in Elizabethan slang “Will” refers to both the male and female genitals: “Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious, / Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in

thine?" (135). This picks up and extends, by doubling, several *doubles entendres* that run through the sonnets addressed to the young man. In the young man sonnets, for example, Shakespeare develops, in various ways, not only sexual, the image of the "pricked prick"—"But since she prick'd these out for women's pleasure, / Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure" (20)—and uses this to characterize a desire which stands somewhere between the homosexual and the heterosexual. It is the same image, really, as "stell'd" in sonnet 24, or the time-marking "dial hand" of sonnet 104, but Shakespeare clearly enjoys the erotic connotations of the "pricked prick"—consider, for example, the fate of Adonis: "And nouseling in his flank, the loving swine / Sheath'd unaware the tusk in his soft groin" (*Venus and Adonis*, lines 1115–1116), or the bawdy puns of *Love's Labor's Lost*, e.g., "Let the mark have a prick in't" (IV.1.132), "The preylful Princess pierc'd and prick'd a pretty pleasing pricklet" (IV.2.56), or, more elaborately, the way Othello takes as well as "took . . . by the throat the circumcised dog / And smote him—thus" (V.2.355–356). In the dark lady sonnets, however, by virtue of the pun on "Will," the poet becomes not only a "pricked prick," but also, again exploiting Elizabethan slang, the "cut cunt" (compare Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*: "These be her very c's, her u's, and her t's, and thus makes she her great P's" (II.5.86–88)). This double doubling, whereby "Will" performs the copulation that the poet speaks about, enables Shakespeare explicitly to develop some of the thematic consequences, not only erotic, that the subject of a verbal name *must* suffer. As a "Will," the poet becomes the chiasmic copula between male and female, presence and absence, inside and outside, waxing and waning, showing and hiding, whole and hole, one and none:

Among a number one is reckon'd none:  
 Then in the number let me pass untold,  
 Though in thy store's account I one must be,  
 For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold  
 That nothing me, a something sweet to thee.  
     Make but my name thy love, and love that still,  
     And then thou lovest me, for my name is Will (136).

Quite apart from the various themes and images that are thus put into crosscoupling play, the "Will" sonnets are significant precisely because they mark the first person of the poet with a name, not a deictic, for this identifies the person of the poet through a system of representational, not presentational, reference. This is quite different from the kind of immediate reference achieved by deictic, I-you, indication, for, as has often been pointed out (e.g., Bertrand Russell on egocentric particulars, Jakobson on shifters, and E. Benveniste on pronouns and relationships of person in the verb), such egocentric reference requires the presence of the speaker to his speech. In contrast, a name retains a stable referent regardless of who speaks it. In ways which I discuss in *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye*, it can be shown, first, that deixis is the mode of first-person speaking required by an epideictic poetics, second, that a post-epideictic poetry, such as Shakespeare experiments with in the dark lady sonnets, acquires its subjective effects from the contest it stages between self-displaying visual deictics and self-belying verbal names, as in sonnet 151, where "flesh . . . rising at thy name doth point out thee / As his triumphant prize," but is also obliged "thy poor drudge to be, / To stand in thy affairs, fall by thy side."

There is more to say about these disappointing pointers, but I would like to note here that it was Oscar Wilde who first insisted in a strong way on the importance for Shakespeare's sonnets of this quarrel between verbal name and visual deictic. It was Wilde who, reading between the lines, and picking up an old conjecture (going back to Thomas Tyrwhitt in 1766), named the poet's catamite "Willie Hughes," doing this in order to draw out the important and pervasive Shakespearean pun on double "hue," "view," "use," and "you"—the same double-U whose present-absent presence distinguishes "whole" from "hole" in sonnet 134. These are the signifiers through which Shakespeare thinks the large narrative of the sonnets. By doubling the dual unity of first and second person, Shakespeare introduces, for the very first time, a third person into epideictic lyric. This formally *absent* third person—a "he" or "she" or "it"—who stands in between, as missing connection, the poet's first and second person, is what the poet becomes to himself when he becomes his name. Compare, for example, the progress of Othello from "all in all sufficient" (IV.1.265) to "That's he that was Othello; here I am" (V.2.283). Recognizing this, it becomes possible to understand why Wilde's *Portrait of W.H.* is the only genuinely literary criticism that Shakespeare's sonnets have ever yet received. Wilde's novella narrates the argument between the metaphors of visual presentation, the "Portrait," and the signifiers of linguistic representation, "W.H." In the same way, Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* acts out the question of what is in a Shakespearean name, thereby putting an end to a theatrical tradition that begins, at least in English drama, with *The Comedy of Errors*. I discuss the relation of Wilde to Shakespeare more fully in *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye*. I also discuss Wilde's concern with the issue of specifically literary naming in "The Significance of Literature: *The Importance of Being Earnest*," October 15 (1980), pp. 79–90.

17. For a discussion of the classical mock encomium, see T.C. Burgess, *Epideictic Literature* (Chicago, 1902), pp. 157–66. For discussions of Renaissance praise paradox, see A.E. Mallock, "The Techniques and Functions of the Renaissance Paradox," *Studies in Philology* 53 (1956), 191–203; E.N. Thompson, "The Seventeenth Century English Essay," *University of Iowa Humanistic Studies*, 3:3 (1926), 94–105; A.S. Pease, "Things Without Honor," *Classical Philology* 21 (1926), 27–42; H.K. Miler, "The Paradoxical Encomium with Special Reference to its Vogue in England: 1600–1800," *Modern Philology* 53:3 (1956), 145–78; A.H. Stockton, "The Paradoxical Encomium in Elizabethan Drama," *University of Texas Studies in English* 28 (1949), 83–104; R.E. Bennet, "Four Paradoxes by Sir William Cornwallis, the Younger," *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature* 13 (1931) 219–40; W.G. Rice, "The *Paradossi* of Ortensio Landi," *University of Michigan Essays and Studies in English and Comparative Literature* 8 (1932), 59–74; "Erasmus and the Tradition of Paradox," *Studies in Philology* 53 (1964), 191–203; W. Kaiser, *Praises of Folly* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963); B. Vickers, "King Lear and Renaissance Paradoxes," *Modern Language Notes* 63:2 (1968), 305–14; R. Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Praise Paradox* (Princeton, N.J., 1966).
18. At stake here is the difference between a rhetorical paradox and a merely logical paradox, for these are not the same, though in the Renaissance they are, of course, very much related. In contemporary philosophical terminology, this is something like the distinction between a real logical paradox (which would carry, if such a thing exists, some of the weight of the rhetorical paradox) and a merely semantic paradox (e.g., The Liar's Paradox).
19. See especially the discussion of *entrelacs* in *Le Visible et l'Invisible* (Paris, 1964), chap. 4.



20. I refer here not only to Lacan's explicit formulations, but also to the development of Lacan's thought, from the early emphasis on visual themes, as in the essay on the "mirror-stage" and accompanying discussions of aggressivity, to the later emphasis on language, anamorphosis, and accompanying discussions of (male) desire, to, finally, as a third term added to the opposition of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, Lacan's emphasis on the "Real," the limits of representation, and accompanying discussions of (female) *jouissance*. Lacan's sense of the Renaissance is colored, however, by a very Catholic and Counter-reformational, a very French, conception of the Baroque: "Le baroque, c'est la régulation de l'âme par la scopie corporelle," *Encore* (Paris, 1975), p. 105, which is why Lacan's direct comments on Shakespeare are often disappointing.
21. Leone Ebreo, *Dialoghi d'amore*, ed. Santino Caramella (Bari, 1929), p. 5, cited by J.C. Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love* (New York, 1958), p. 86. Ebreo's distinction remains a strong challenge to subsequent writers on the subject. Consider, for example, "Love, universally taken, is defined to be a desire, as a word of more ample signification; and though Leon Hebraeus, the most copious writer of this subject, in his third dialogue makes no difference, yet in his first he distinguisheth them again, and defines love by desire." Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. A. Shilleto (London, 1903), Part III, sect. 1, mem. 1, subs. 2; vol. III, p. 10.
22. Ebreo, *Dialoghi*, p. 207, cited by Nelson, pp. 86–87.
23. That desire is death is of course a commonplace, e.g., Ronsard's "Car l'Amour et la Mort n'est qu'une mesme chose," *Sonnets Pour Hélène*, II:77, *Oeuvres complètes de Ronsard*, ed. G. Cohen (Paris, 1950). What is important is the specifically double way in which Shakespearean revision revives this dead metaphor.

## Pastoral and the Domain of Lyric in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*

THIS ESSAY SEEKS TO EXPLAIN, more precisely than is usual and in terms appropriate to literary history, the importance to Elizabethan poetry of Edmund Spenser's *The Shepherd's Calendar*. Published in 1579, a decade before *The Faerie Queene*, this book of pastorals established Spenser as the leading poet of his generation. Its editor, one "E.K." (never identified but clearly someone associated with Spenser), heralded the work as a major literary event and its author as "our new poet." It was reprinted four times in Spenser's lifetime and evoked imitations and admiring comments almost from the date of its publication. Spenserians and traditional literary historians still take *The Shepherd's Calendar* at E.K.'s valuation and treat it (not without reason) as inaugurating the great age of Elizabethan poetry. But it is difficult for modern readers of the work—who still exist, because most graduate students in English have to read it—to feel its life and originality, and we have therefore had difficulty in understanding what all the fuss was about.<sup>1</sup>

In some ways it is easy to see why *The Shepherd's Calendar* was an event. It was the first set of English pastorals in the European tradition, and in emulating Virgil's *Eclogues*, it self-consciously inaugurated a poetic career on the model of Virgil's—one that would move from a book of eclogues to a national epic. The very success of this project has encouraged modern scholars to turn away from asking why *The Shepherd's Calendar* made such a difference when it appeared and to treat it mainly as a prototype of *The Faerie Queene*: most studies since 1950 have emphasized the young poet's epic striving, moral vision, and allegorical technique.<sup>2</sup> Recent studies by younger scholars have sought to give a more precisely historical account of *The Shepherd's Calendar*. They have drawn attention to what one might call the problematics of a poetic career in Elizabethan England; to the effects on Spenser of being a courtier and depending on patronage; and in general to the way various social pressures and realities make their presence felt in the poem.<sup>3</sup> This kind of historical account has brought out the difficulties and dilemmas of Spenser's literary endeavor in a way that makes his literary achievement all the more impressive. If you assume that in any place or at any time, Renaissance poets could write good pastorals, *The Shepherd's Calendar* may appear to you no better than it did to Dr. Johnson, who mocked its "studied barbarity."<sup>4</sup> But the poem was not, so to speak, just there to be written. On the

contrary, writing pastorals both required and enabled Spenser to overcome—and helped English poetry break the grip of—the difficulties that attended writing lyric poems in mid-sixteenth-century England.

To understand the significance of Spenser's writing a book of Virgilian eclogues, we need to imagine what a young English poet, around 1575, would have conceived a poem and a book of poems to be. To do so, we must overcome our tendency to think of lyric as the normal mode of nondramatic or nonheroic poetry. We assume this for a number of reasons—first of all, the still-determining heritage of Romanticism, but also many aspects of Renaissance poetry: the older view of Elizabethan poets as “a nest of singing birds”; the preeminence of sonnets among Shakespeare's nondramatic poems and among the poems that still matter by Sidney, Fulke Greville, and others; the centrality of major lyrics in the literary achievement of Donne, Herbert, Herrick, Marvell, and Milton. But what conception of and models for the vernacular lyric would have been available to the young Spenser? Essentially two kinds of poem—the courtly love lyric and the short poem of moral observation or counsel—and a handful of volumes in which these had appeared: Tottel's *Miscellany* of 1557 (in which the poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt and the earl of Surrey were first published) and poetic collections in the '60s and '70s by the likes of Barnabe Googe, George Turberville, and George Gascoigne. Quite aside from questions of quality and range, these poems were compromised by the double apology with which they characteristically appeared: the apology for dealing with matters of love and the apology for appearing in print. Wyatt and Surrey had no choice in the matter, being dead when Richard Tottel published their poems, but both Googe—who anticipated Spenser by trying his hand at eclogues—and Gascoigne, much the finest poet of his generation, disclaimed responsibility for the publication of their poems. Gascoigne's *100 Sundry Flowers* was published in 1573 with an elaborate fiction of manuscripts entrusted to a friend, who then showed them to another friend, who now (against the first friend's wishes) presents them to the public.<sup>5</sup>

If we view *The Shepheardes Calender* as a mid-Tudor collection of short poems, we find a number of resemblances to its immediate predecessors. Its poems, like Gascoigne's, are presented by a friend of the poet, who is known to us only by his initials. Like Tottel's *Miscellany*, it begins with a poem in which the lover's wintry condition is contrasted with the emerging spring season. It shares major themes with its predecessors—notably the frustrations and wastefulness of love and the conflict between youthful impulse and the moral wisdom and severity of age. Recognizing such likenesses gives a more precise form to our initial question: what difference did it make, in 1579, for a writer of short poems to present himself as a writer of pastorals?

It was certainly important that Spenser was the first Englishman to emulate ancient and modern writers of what was a prestigious kind of poetry. Spenser's E.K. may be as unknowable as Gascoigne's G.T. and H.W., and he may equally

be a mask of the poet himself. But he appears not in the character of a courtier who has passed around certain poems and shared certain experiences, but as an editor who can place the poet in relation to his European predecessors and who can annotate each of his eclogues. *The Shepheardes Calender* thus has the appearance of humanist editions of the Greek and Latin classics and of modern classics like Petrarch's *Rime* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. The volume accordingly gives no sign of diffidence about appearing in print. Print was the humanist's medium, and publication was consistent with E.K.'s hailing the author as "our new poet," as opposed to the pejorative epithet of "rhymet."<sup>6</sup>

What concerns us, however, is not E.K.'s publicity but the way such claims and ambitions affect the poems themselves. Writing Virgilian pastorals made a decisive difference because it meant representing a world of shepherd-singers and representing yourself, the poet, as one of them. Spenser's lyric predecessors characteristically represent themselves as courtiers. This is manifestly the case with Wyatt and Surrey: whatever the relation of their poems to actual experience and situations, the speakers of these poems appear in the character of courtiers. Gascoigne, though socially more marginal than Wyatt and Surrey, also writes as a courtier.<sup>7</sup> He presents his poems as written to various ladies or for various friends on various amatory or social occasions, and the poems characteristically end with a "device" or "posy." His greatest poem, "Gascoigne's Woodmanship," is addressed to his patron and represents an actual social occasion as an allegory of his failure as a courtier. Spenser's life and career were in a number of ways different from Gascoigne's, but he too was a courtier in the sense that he sought in the court itself or in noble households the patronage that would establish him as a public servant. What then does it mean for such a courtier-poet to write pastorals? More than one recent critic has answered this question by turning to the most important Elizabethan statement of a courtly aesthetic, *The Arte of English Poesie*, attributed to George Puttenham and probably written earlier than 1589, when it was published.<sup>8</sup> Puttenham argues that pastoral is not a primitive but a sophisticated form of poetry. Poets, he says, devised eclogues

not of purpose to counterfait or represent the rusticall manner of loues and communication: but vnder the vaile of homely persons, and in rude speeches to insinuate and glaunce at greater matters, and such as perchance had not bene safe to haue bene disclosed in any other sort, which may be perceiued by the Eglogues of *Virgill*, in which are treated by figure matters of greater importance than the loues of *Titirus* and *Corydon*.<sup>9</sup>

Prompted by Puttenham's awareness of the danger of glancing at greater matters, critics have argued that Spenser's pastoral personages, far from being a sign of poetic autonomy, bear witness to the social pressures on poetic utterance.

But the relevant passages in *The Shepheardes Calender* are bolder than Puttenham's remark leads us to expect. More than one eclogue associates Spenser with the left wing of English Protestantism, and his boldness extends to specific allu-

sions.<sup>10</sup> The July eclogue praises a wise old shepherd named Algrind, who speaks with authority about the character of a true shepherd (i.e., minister) and who is said to have suffered a lamentable injury while sitting on a high hill. "Algrind" simply transposes the syllables of the name of Edmund Grindal, the archbishop of Canterbury, and a poet who praised his virtues and lamented his misfortunes was not playing it safe. Two years earlier, the queen had ordered Grindal to suppress meetings called "prophesyings," in which a group of ministers met in public to discuss and interpret biblical texts. These prophesyings were supported by progressive and radical Protestants and opposed by conservatives; when Grindal refused to carry out the order to suppress them, he was placed under virtual house arrest and never regained the queen's favor.<sup>11</sup> Yet if praising Grindal and regretting his fate risk royal displeasure, there are aspects of the poem that remind us of Puttenham's wariness. The speaker represents Algrind as a victim and himself as equally helpless, and the simple moral he draws—"But I am taught by *Algrins* ill, / to loue the lowe degree"<sup>12</sup>—suggests a retreat from offending those in power at the very moment the poet has risked it.

Spenser's represented shepherds are neither completely autonomous—free just because they are literary—nor entirely the creatures of the courtier's situation. There is a genuine doubleness about them, a mixture of outspokenness and diffidence, that E.K. indicates in discussing why one speaks of great matters in pastoral verse. He says that his author's rejection of "glorious shewes" "appeareth by the basenesse" of his pastoral pseudonym, Colin Clout, "wherein, it semeth, he chose rather to vnfold great matter of argument couertly, then professing it, not suffice thereto accordingly."<sup>13</sup> By this last phrase he means: if the poet professed it, i.e., professed to deal with great matters, he might not "suffice thereto." Where Puttenham views the pastoral mask as a way of dealing with social danger, E.K. looks to it for rhetorical adequacy.

We can restate E.K.'s claim of rhetorical sufficiency by saying that speaking through shepherds enabled Spenser to speak out in a relatively full and uncompromised way. I mean "relatively" in a precise sense—relative to the character of the figures represented. The literary shepherd's sufficiency to great matters is due to his simplicity and innocence. These confer on him a moral authority, which can take, through the image of the Good Shepherd, a religious or ecclesiastical form. The shepherd's simple character also manifests itself in forthright, energetic speech, which sometimes appears as blunt moralizing and sometimes as a quasi-biblical eloquence—as in one elder shepherd's praise of the primitive church ("May," lines 103–31), which Milton quoted as giving a "presage" of his own "reforming times."<sup>14</sup> But the shepherd's simplicity, the source of his moral and poetic strength, is coextensive with his vulnerability and powerlessness. Thus built into the very figure through whom the poet expresses his vision or his complaints, there is an acknowledgment that limits their force and that backs away from—indeed does not even consider—the kind of challenge to authority

that in real life was expressed by Grindal's defiant letter to the queen about the prophesyings or Sidney's, objecting to her proposed marriage to the duc d'Alençon.<sup>15</sup> Spenser dedicated *The Shepheardes Calender* to one of these men and praised the other in it, but the very terms on which he gave voice to his allegiances also produced the quietism that ends most of the eclogues that comment on the public world.

The "moral" eclogues, as E.K. called them, may not be "lyric" in our sense, though "moral" was certainly an important category of the mid-Tudor short poem. But in love poetry, too, we find that Spenser's pastoral speakers voice attitudes and feelings in ways unavailable to the courtier-speakers of lyrics by his predecessors and contemporaries. Consider the following poem from Sidney's *Arcadia*, the first version of which is almost exactly contemporary with *The Shepheardes Calender*. The two heroes of Sidney's romance fall in love with two princesses who are being kept in rural seclusion by their father, the ruler of Arcadia. In order to gain access to the princesses, the heroes disguise themselves, one as an Amazon, the other as a shepherd. The following poem is spoken by the newly disguised shepherd:

Come shepherd's weeds, become your master's mind:  
Yield outward show, what inward change he tries:  
Nor be abashed, since such a guest you find,  
Whose strongest hope in your weak comfort lies.

Come shepherd's weeds, attend my woeful cries:  
Disuse yourselves from sweet Menalcas' voice:  
For other be those tunes which sorrow ties  
From those clear notes which freely may rejoice.  
Then pour out plaint, and in one word say this:  
Helpless his plaint who spoils himself of bliss.<sup>16</sup>

This poem has many of the qualities we esteem in Renaissance lyric. It begins with a witty play on *become* that engages the whole point of the poem—the assumed costume being appropriate (one sense of *become*) because it is an index of transformed feeling (the second sense of *become*). There is a corresponding subtlety and poise in the movement of the verse. The line "From those clear notes which freely may rejoice" nicely mimes the speaker's plight: the initial spondees suggest his sense of separation from the feeling that is indicated in the more fluent phrase "which freely may rejoice." Details like these bear witness to pressures of judgment and complexity of awareness that lead one critic to praise the song for the way it "balances a sense of loss of the world of action . . . with a wry acceptance of 'shepherd's weedes.'" <sup>17</sup>

Wit, ironic self-awareness, and a sense of social and erotic dilemma are characteristic of the best mid-Tudor poems in which the lyric speaker is conceived as a courtier. The fact that in this poem the courtier is disguised as a shepherd

makes all the more decisive its difference from a pastoral like the June eclogue of *The Shepherdes Calender*. That poem concerns a similar transformation, as the shepherd Hobbinoll urges his friend Colin Clout to recover the inner freedom and the “clear notes” (to use Sidney’s phrase) that were his before he fell in love. The June eclogue is an impressive poem, but it can seem quite unsatisfactory when one comes to it from poems that, like the best of Sidney and Gascoigne, meet the criterion stated in Gascoigne’s treatise, *Certain Notes of Instruction*: “The first and most necessarie poynt that euer I founde meete to be considered in making of a delectable poeme is this, to grounde it upon some fine inuention.”<sup>18</sup> This notion of a fine invention (a rhetorical term that indicates the basic conceit or initiating idea of a poem) is the specifically literary criterion that emerges from the witty displays, the charming pleasures, and the controlled self-assertions characteristic of courtiers’ poems. Grounding lyrics on fine inventions leads to what we prize in poets like Donne and Herbert—a coherent grasp of poetic idea and dramatic situation. If we judge the June eclogue by the criterion of self-aware and witty control, it seems rather incoherent, because it blurs the relation between love and poetic power. For example, Colin Clout says that his splendid music-making occurred in his youth, when “course of carelesse yeeres / Did let me walke withouten lincks of loue” (33–34). But in the very next stanza he says: “Tho [i.e., then] couth I sing of loue, and tune my pype / Vnto my plaintiue pleas in verses made” (41–42).

Nevertheless, the pastoral speakers of “June” are capable of lyric utterance denied to the courtly lovers of the *Arcadia*. Sidney’s Musidorus concludes:

Then pour out plaint, and in one word say this:  
 Helpless his plaint who spoils himself of bliss.

Courtly lyrics often conclude with this kind of aphoristic statement, which can produce the satisfactions of wit as both public performance and ironic self-awareness. It is a main point of such poems to conclude by saying something “in one word.” (In sixteenth-century English *word* could mean “motto,” though the phrase here can also have its modern meaning.) But a speaker who encapsulates his woes “in one word” is doing something very different from what is indicated by the phrase “then pour out plaint,” and Sidney, if not his characters, was quite aware of this. Two pages after this poem, when Musidorus is discovered by his friend the disguised Amazon, the narrator says:

But Musidorus, looking dolefully upon her, wringing his hands, and pouring out abundance of tears, began to recount unto her all this I have already told you, but with such passionate dilating of it that, for my part, I have not a feeling insight enough into the matter to be able lively to express it. Sufficeth it that whatsoever a possessed heart with a good tongue, to a dear friend, could utter was at that time largely set forth.<sup>19</sup>

Passionate dilating and large setting forth are precisely what we find in pastoral love laments. In not representing the disguised shepherd's utterances here—much less representing them as poems—Sidney indicates that his hero is more a courtier in exile and disguise than a pastoral lover of the sort one finds in continental pastoral romances, like Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia* (1504) and the *Diana* (1559) of Jorge de Montemayor. That kind of pastoral speaker, like Spenser's Colin Clout, can—in the phrase shared by Sidney's poem and the June eclogue—pour out his plaints:

I wote my rymes bene rough, and rudely drest:  
The fyttre they, my carefull case to frame:  
Enough is me to paint out my vnrest,  
And poore my piteous plaints out in the same.

The God of shepheards *Tityrus* is dead,  
Who taught me homely, as I can, to make.  
He, whilst he liued, was the soueraigne head  
Of shepheards all, that bene with loue ytake:  
Well couth he wayle hys Woes, and lightly slake  
The flames, which loue within his heart had bredd,  
And tell vs mery tales, to keepe vs wake,  
The while our sheepe about vs safely fedde.

Now dead he is, and lyeth wrapt in lead,  
(O why should death on hym such outrage shoue?)  
And all hys passing skil with him is fledde,  
The fame whereof doth dayly greater growe.  
But if on me some little drops would flowe,  
Of that the spring was in his learned hedde,  
I soone would learne these woods, to wayle my woe,  
And teache the trees, their trickling teares to shedde.

Then should my plaints, causd of discourtesee,  
As messengers of all my painfull plight,  
Flye to my loue, where euer that she bee,  
And pierce her heart with poynt of worthy wight.  
("June," lines 77–100)

The lines about teaching the woods to wail are particularly revealing. This is the most resonant point in Colin's complaint, a moment of Orphic intimations, and yet it is a counterfactual statement: "*If* on me some drops would flow . . . I soon would learn these woods." In the mode of Sidney's poem, syntax controls utterance. Spenser's lines and phrases detach themselves from their sentences, so that his speaker achieves a fullness of utterance that is in one sense within his power—because he desires and can imagine it—but on the other hand is not in his stable dramatic character. The modes and conventions of pastoral, in a passage like



this, free the woeful lover from the assumptions of the courtly lyric of social situation and witty coherence.

Why should pastoral poems have expanded lyric possibilities this way? As we look back over this passage, we may wonder what difference there is between saying, of the dead Tityrus, "well couth he wayle hys Woes" and the kind of Orphic "wayle my woe" that Colin imagines for himself. But there is no difficulty in seeing how Spenser came to write these two stanzas. In each he imagines and represents the shepherd-singer in one of his traditional roles. Colin appears as a doubled version of the lamenting (or, as E.K. says, "plaintive") shepherd, bewailing first the death of Tityrus and then his own love woes. The representation of Tityrus has more complex sources. His very name indicates the role of master poet in which he first appears, for Tityrus was Virgil's pastoral pseudonym. Second he appears as a lover, like most poetical shepherds in the Renaissance, but a lover of a particular character, for whom expressing love woes works their cure. This version of pastoral love experience goes back to Theocritus' *Idyll* 11, the complaint of the lovelorn Polyphemus, in which the promise of curing by utterance is explicitly made and whose comic tone may lie behind the phrase "*lightly* slake the flames." Finally Tityrus appears as a teller of tales, like the older shepherds whose fables conclude the February and May eclogues, and his identity comes to the surface in the phrase "mery tales." For the ancient poet who can teach the *English* poet "homely, as he can, to make" is Chaucer, on whom Spenser bestows Virgil's pastoral name.

Spenser conceived *The Shepheardes Calender* in terms of roles for literary shepherds made available to him by his European and English predecessors. By conceiving lyrical speakers in this way, he was able to deal with the problem—which is hard for us to imagine as a problem—of motivating serious lyrics. Apart from the official critical hierarchies, which gave most prestige to narrative and dramatic poems, the work of Spenser's contemporaries reveals a pressure to justify or account for lyrical utterance. Gascoigne's *100 Sundry Flowers* begins with a prose tale, "The Adventures of Master F.J.," in which the various moves in an entangled tale of seduction prompt and explain some dozen lyrics, on whose rhetorical efficacy G.T., the author's friend, makes knowing comments. The lyrics that follow F.J.'s tale are frequently introduced by substantial accounts of the circumstances that gave rise to them. "Gascoigne's Woodmanship," which seems self-sufficient to us, is introduced by ten lines of prose that not only explain the circumstances of the poem but motivate it as Gascoigne's response to his patron's teasing. The lyrics of the *Arcadia* are prompted by love pursuits and entanglements that, though fictional, are imagined in full social and dramatic detail. Sidney's attention to situation can extend to surprisingly minute points. When Musidorus tells his shepherd's weeds to "disuse yourselves from sweet Menalcas' voice," he is not speaking, as we might imagine, of some typical literary shepherd,

but of the shepherd in the story who exchanged costumes with him.<sup>20</sup> When we see Gascoigne and Sidney so attentive to and concerned with the social motives to lyric, we can understand the advantage of pastoral speakers like those of *The Shepheardes Calender*. Just as for the humanist poet writing eclogues was its own justification, so the fictions and conventions of pastoral resolve problems of motivating lyric utterance. A literary shepherd is by definition a singer, and pastoral poems are characteristically singing contests or funeral songs or songs in praise of a ruler or love laments.

There are eclogues in Sidney's *Arcadia*, but their motivation is as social and dramatic as the motivation of the lyrics that occur in the narrative itself. Basilius, the ruler who has retired to the country, wants entertainment for himself and his family, and he therefore has the local shepherds perform eclogues for him. This kind of attention to narrative consistency and motivation leads Sidney to segregate his pastoral poems from the main body of his pastoral romance. The eclogues occur in separate sections, as entertainments, between the five books of the romance. The separation of the shepherd-singers from the figures in the romance is reflected in the hothouse atmosphere of their technically proficient but interminable poems. Even in the greatest of these poems, Sidney works within his self-imposed limitations. The famous double sestina, "Ye goatherd gods," is at last the poem in which suffering lovers pour out their complaints. But Sidney could produce it only by inventing two special pastoral lovers—simpler than the courtier heroes but grander than the ordinary shepherds—to sing it.<sup>21</sup> And the poem is like the other eclogues (and unlike the love lyrics of the narrative) in being lengthy and technically difficult.

Compared to earlier English poems, the eclogues of *The Shepheardes Calender* and the *Arcadia* seem to have a common purpose, to domesticate the forms and modes of European pastoral. But their versifying experiments reveal different lyrical motives and interests. Even in a rule-governed form like the sestina—of which Sidney and Spenser wrote the first two examples in English—their poems are quite different.<sup>22</sup> Aside from the fact that Spenser adopts a simpler scheme of ordering the six end words, he runs the last four of the six stanzas together with strong enjambments. This violation of stanzaic integrity almost seems incorrect in a sestina, in the sense in which one might say that a fugue is incorrect. But it is very clear why Spenser treats the form the way he does. Where for Sidney sticking to elaborate rules perfectly expresses the constraints that increase the urgency of passion, Spenser treats the sestina, with its repetitive and cumulative effects, as an opportunity for vocal expansiveness and modulation. In Sidney's sestina, five of the six end words are fixed settings or times: *mountains, valleys, forests, morning, evening*. In Spenser's, four end words—*woe, resound, cries, and augment*—contribute to the main effect of swelling lament and its final modulation into the nightingale's song.

It is equally revealing that Spenser's sestina is not a separate eclogue. It is juxtaposed with a lilted roundelay, sung responsively by two shepherds in the following fashion:

*Perigot.* I saw the bouncing Bellibone,  
*Willye.* hey ho Bonibell,  
*Per.* Tripping ouer the dale alone,  
*Wil.* she can trippe it very well.  
 ("August," lines 61–64)

We need not consider this any better than it is to see the point of what Spenser is doing. In this poem and the sestina that follows, he pursues the implications of two different verse forms employed on the same subject. The first—native, tripping, and merry—is not, as one might think, used to express a happy love. One of the singers here pines “in paynefull loue,” even as Colin Clout does. But the verse form, both the meter and the use of refrain, determines the force of the love distress and the Petrarchan diction; it suggests that the pains of love are something a shepherd can live with and, as the duet form indicates, share with his fellows. Colin Clout's sestina, on the other hand, is high art, European and formal, used to express strong, unrelieved, and isolated love suffering. These poems occur in the same eclogue because they work out two extremes of the pastoral assumption that love suffering is appeased or stabilized by song. The lyrical self-consciousness of this experiment is shown by the fact that these love complaints are songs in the strict sense, not the putatively real utterances we find in other eclogues. The two shepherds who sing the roundelay meet for a singing match, while Colin Clout's sestina is not sung by him, the suffering lover and maker, but by another shepherd, who performs it as he might an opera aria.

Performance of known poems and kinds of poems is a main and sometimes sufficient motive to lyric in *The Shepheardes Calender*. The April lay celebrating “*Eliza, Queene of shepheardes*” is said to be a poem that Colin Clout wrote in his carefree youth and that is now performed by his friend Hobbinoll. This eclogue, the fourth in *The Shepheardes Calender*, can also be seen as Spenser's performance of the kind of imperial, golden-age pastoral invented by Virgil in his fourth eclogue. There is a similar association of imitation and performance in the November eclogue, a pastoral elegy based on a poem by the sixteenth-century French poet, Clément Marot. Within the November eclogue this elegy is conceived as a performance: it is uttered by Colin Clout in response to a request for a song; it is rhetorically lofty, in highly wrought stanzas; and it laments a communal, not a private, loss. It seems equally appropriate to consider Spenser a performer in this poem, since Colin Clout is a role he has created for himself and since he himself is producing a version not simply of his immediate source, the poem by Marot, but of a known and important kind of poem, the pastoral elegy.

The idea of performance extends to more than explicitly performed songs and conscious imitations. Any segment of a poem can emerge as a set piece, and some, like the elaborate stanzas of "April" and "November," invite such treatment. In "April," for example, one finds stanzas devoted to Eliza's birth, to her costume, to the dance of the Graces, and to the flowers gathered for her. The following stanza shows the performative principle involved:

Pan may be proud, that euer he begot  
such a Bellibone,  
And *Syrinx* reioyse, that euer was her lot  
to beare such an one.  
Soone as my younglings cryen for the dam,  
To her will I offer a milkwite Lamb:  
Shee is my goddesse plaine,  
And I her shepherds swayne,  
Albee forswonck and forswatt I am.  
(lines 91–99)

E.K. says the name Bellibone is "homely spoken," and we can extend this observation to the clinching phrase, "forswonck and forswatt";<sup>23</sup> to the represented gift offering; and to the two short lines near the end, in which queen and suitor are acknowledged with lovely plainness. Everything about the stanza depends on conceiving the speaker as a rustic. What is revealing is that he is more rustic here than elsewhere in the poem: that is, the stanza is based on a distinct role, separately performed, within the conspicuous performance of the whole poem.

Used as we are to the lyrics of later poets, we may feel that such a stanza is too sharply set off, too much a set piece: in the greatest lyrics, freshly adopted roles are compatible with the felt continuity of the speaker. But discovering such flexible role playing and capacity for vocal performance was crucial for the English lyric. A stanza in "June" represents this aspect of *The Shepheardes Calender*:

*Colin*, to heare thy rymes and roundelays,  
Which thou were wont on wastfull hylls to singe,  
I more delight, then larke in Sommer dayes:  
Whose Echo made the neyghbour groues to ring,  
And taught the byrds, which in the lower spring  
Did shroude in shady leaues from sonny rayes,  
Frame to thy songe their chereful cheriping,  
Or hold theyr peace, for shame of thy swete layes.  
(*"June,"* lines 49–56)

The lyricism here directly derives from pastoral role playing. The stanza is pastoral, because it imagines song as produced by responsive listening—a fiction of pastoral, with its song contests, echoing woods, and the like, that corresponds to the fact that poets wrote pastorals in responsive imitation and modification of

their predecessors. The fullness of lyrical effect is due to the fact that the shepherd's responsive listening has led him to take on not one but two roles—that of Colin Clout, the master singer, and of the lark, both of whom can be imagined to have made the groves to ring and taught the birds to frame their own responsive song.

By writing a book of eclogues, conceived as the performance of pastoral roles, Spenser created what I would like to call a “domain of lyric.” In using this term, I am trying to meet Louis Adrian Montrose's argument that when critics speak of Spenser's work in terms of “aesthetic space,” they ignore what is specifically historical and cultural about his or any Elizabethan writer's poetic project.<sup>24</sup> The way to avoid this charge—which is certainly justified in a number of cases—is not to oppose the historical and the aesthetic but to recognize that the claim to relative autonomy, by means of something that looks like aesthetic “space,” was Spenser's historical (and therefore, indeed, problematic) aim in *The Shepheardes Calender*. I think “domain” takes cultural and ideological elements into account, because it conceives “aesthetic space” in terms of rule and authority. One of the age's most famous lyrics, by Sir Edward Dyer—a courtier close to Sidney and known to Spenser—begins, “My mind to me a kingdom is.” Sidney's *Arcadia*, according to the opening sentences of the romance, is the province of singers because of its governance. Sidney says the muses chose *Arcadia* as “their chiefest repairing place” principally because of the “moderate and well tempered minds of the people,” which are due to the fact that “the good minds of the former princes had set down good laws.”<sup>25</sup> Spenser did not feel his own domain of song needed such precise social specifications, just as neither he nor E.K. offers anything like Sidney's explanation that the *Arcadian* shepherds are good singers because they “were not such base shepherds as we commonly make account of, but the very owners of the sheep themselves” and furthermore were infiltrated by gentlemen poets, whose contributions raised the general level of performance. These are not surprising remarks for a gentleman of rank, but they are for a pastoral poet, who, one would think, will find it difficult to take on the roles and voices of his represented shepherds if even their fictional world is invaded by these social anxieties.

Spenser could establish his domain of lyric because his literary assumptions and practices gave *The Shepheardes Calender* a certain distance from courtly and social accountability. A third reason Sidney gives for the excellence of *Arcadian* singers is that “the presence of their own duke . . . animated the shepherds the more exquisitely to seek a worthy accomplishment of his good liking.” This explanation is consistent with the fact that the major pastorals contemporary with *Arcadia* and *The Shepheardes Calender*—Sidney's *Lady of May*, Peele's *Arraignement of Paris*, Lyly's *Gallathea*—were masques or plays written to entertain the queen. Spenser's main audience, however, was not the monarch who bestows favor, nor even the court as a whole, but what print alone could provide—a

heterogeneous group of knowledgeable readers. For a number of reasons, including his social origins and his education, he was responsive to and felt empowered by another world than the court, the world of learning represented by his university and European humanism. Nor should we think, as traditional views of tradition tell us, that humanism in general or pastoral poetry in particular was enabling in any simple way, as if Spenser were the passive beneficiary of something already in place. Quite the contrary, Spenser's own innovations—notably the device of the calendar, but also his evident intent to “overgo” his sixteenth-century predecessors<sup>26</sup>—show that he was conscious of staking out his claim in the world of European letters. By the modest boldness everywhere evident in *The Shepheardes Calender*, Spenser achieved a qualified but nonetheless genuine independence, of which the legal concept of *demesne* (= “domain”) is a suggestive representation. According to F. W. Maitland, the term is

applied either to the absolute ownership of the king, or to the tenure of the person who held land to his own use, mediately or immediately from the king. . . . In every case the ultimate (free) holder, the person who *stands at the bottom of the scale*, who seems most like an owner of the land, and who *has a general right of doing what he pleases* with it, is said to hold the land in *demesne*.<sup>27</sup>

Whatever the degree of Spenser's freedom to poetize and possess his own space, the problem of social authority clings to and haunts *The Shepheardes Calender*. Its confidence in poetic tradition can be thought to give it a certain distance from the pressures of an immediate courtly audience, but the humanist tradition was itself founded on the ideal of the learned man as the counselor of princes. This ideal and its problematic relation to courtly realities had motivated the greatest English creation of imaginative space before *The Faerie Queene*—More's Utopia, a literary domain if there ever was one. *The Shepheardes Calender* certainly did not undo the work of decades that turned English humanists, as G. K. Hunter has argued of Lyly, from princely counselors to marginal entertainers.<sup>28</sup> Lyly was not without his own pretensions to moral authority, but the brittle brilliance of his writing was inadequate to them. Spenser's vastly greater talent was adequate to and enabled by the range of performance required by a prestigious form of poetry. He was therefore able to achieve, as his contemporaries immediately recognized, a kind of *literary* authority.

Like the metaphor of a poetic domain, “literary authority” is a thoroughly ambiguous term. The humanist claim is that literary prowess gives one cultural, social, and political authority. On the other hand, literary authority can be seen as merely literary, confined to the world of letters. Whatever its scope and powers, the idea of literary authority is crucial to the epoch of Sidney, Marlowe, and Shakespeare and, later, of Ben Jonson, Donne (praised by his elegist Thomas Carew for ruling “the universal monarchy of wit”), and Milton. Spenser's claim to full cultural authority was to be made in *The Faerie Queene*, but in *The Shepheardes*

*Calender* he had already achieved—and for the first time in English—a kind of lyric authority. First of all, the work itself is a complete and substantial book of short poems that stands on its own terms. This will fail to impress us only if we forget the problems of motivating lyric that we have seen in Gascoigne, with his elaborations and evasions, and in Sidney with his romance narration and his self-conscious staging and justifying of his eclogues. *The Shepheardes Calender* appeals for its justification only to what it is, an eclogue book, and its supporting device, the calendar, is enabling and enhancing. If it begins with a diffident bid for Sidney's protection, in the author's poem "To his book," it concludes with an envoi that repeats Horace's proud claim: "Loe I haue made a Calender for euery yeare, / That steele in strength, and time in durance shall outweare."

The literary achievement Spenser claims for his book manifests itself in the lyric authority of his pastoral self-representation, Colin Clout. In the first half of *The Shepheardes Calender*, Colin appears divided against himself: once the master poet, he is now reduced by love to the complaining monotony of the January eclogue and the uneven eloquence he displays in "June." But in "August," his sestina, though not sung by him, expresses his love woes in a form as highly wrought as the youthful celebration of Eliza in "April." Colin's sestina leads to the two final eclogues, in both of which he himself is the singer and which sum up what E.K. called the "plaintive" aspect of the whole sequence. "November" expresses an impersonal grief, uses the most elaborate and lofty stanza in all the eclogues, and is consciously in a main tradition of European poetry. In "December," Colin Clout rehearses his life and love-suffering and uses a native form—the six-line stanza that was common in mid-Tudor lyric—to express his own particular grief and loss. Both poems combine strong feeling with moral awareness and formal control. "November" endows the technical fanciness and impersonal moralizing of Colin's elegy with the passionate feeling E.K. admires in his commentary. In "December," Colin takes a fuller and more accepting view of his plight—and utters a richer and more various complaint—than he does in "January," the opening poem, in which he is mired in his wretchedness.

Colin Clout's emergence as the singer of the two concluding poems—as the master singer in "November" and as, in a sense, master of himself in "December"—might lead us to speak, in a general way, of his lyric authority. But I think the term has a more precise meaning, because these two poems speak to two of the main cultural pressures on the mid-Tudor lyric, the disparagement of love and the moral conflict between youth and age. This conflict is the subject of the February eclogue and underlies the ecclesiastical debate in "May." But in the second half of the work, authoritative old shepherds give way to shepherds who are past youthful innocence, but who do not step into the old shepherd's role of fixed moral authority. Diggon Davy in "September," Cuddie in "October," and Colin Clout himself are all speakers whose experience has thwarted them: Diggon as a seeker of ecclesiastical vocation, Cuddie as an ambitious and noble-spirited

poet, Colin as a pastoral philosopher and singer. For each of them, Spenser seeks to develop a rhetoric that combines, rather than opposes, imagination and moral awareness, emotional energy and the felt lessons of experience. Where Diggon Davy and Cuddie appear in dialogues with other shepherds, Colin's two songs are self-sufficient monodies. The pastoral assumption that song can resolve or at least fully voice distress becomes a source of poetic authority in these poems. They turn the moral and cultural oppositions that in other writers compromise lyric into sources of lyrical accomplishment. Like Sidney's double sestina, they endow the expression of loss with what has the feeling of lyric presence. But where this sense of presence in Sidney's poem is a function of the verse form itself, in the last two eclogues of *The Shepheardes Calender* it attaches itself to the first-person speaker. Sidney too had a pastoral pseudonym, but it was Colin Clout who became a figure, even a name to reckon with, in Elizabethan culture.

## Notes

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This essay was originally presented as a paper in a session on "The Lyric Spenser" at The English Institute, Cambridge, Mass., September 1984.

1. For readers unfamiliar with *The Shepheardes Calender*, the following information may be helpful. It was Spenser's first poetic work, published when he was about twenty-seven. The poet identified himself only as "Immerito," though contemporary references show that it was immediately known to be Spenser's. It was dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, who as nephew of the earl of Leicester, one of the most powerful men in England, was Spenser's social superior, but who was in some ways Spenser's peer, in that the two were exact contemporaries and were engaged in similar literary projects. The book consists of twelve pastoral poems and consciously emulates Virgil's *Eclogues*. The production of the book indicated its literary ambition. It appeared with a woodcut at the head of each eclogue and with substantial prefaces and a commentary on each poem by the editor, E.K.

The main innovation Spenser introduced in the eclogue book was the device of assigning each eclogue to a month of the year—hence the title (originally that of an almanac) and the total of twelve eclogues (vs. Virgil's ten). Each eclogue is in some way appropriate to the month to which it is assigned (e.g., "February," when the year is turning from winter to spring, is a debate about love between an old and a young shepherd), and the four seasons, with all their metaphorical applications and implications, are Spenser's main device for unifying the collection. In addition to their seasonal connections, the twelve poems fall into three groups that E.K. called "moral" (this includes ecclesiastical satire), "plaintive" (mainly love laments), and "recreative." A number of shepherds appear in the poem, and more than one can be thought to speak for the poet. But the main figure is one Colin Clout, with whose love woes the sequence begins and ends and who is explicitly identified as the poet's pastoral persona.

Quotations from *The Shepheardes Calender* are from *Spenser's Minor Poems*, ed. Ernest de Sélincourt (Oxford, 1910; revised ed., 1960).

2. The best of these studies, to my mind, is Isabel G. MacCaffrey, "Allegory and Pastoral in *The Shepheardes Calender*," *ELH* 36 (1969): 88–109.



3. See especially the remarkable articles by Louis Adrian Montrose: "'The perfecte paterne of a Poete': The Poetics of Courtship in *The Shepheardes Calender*," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 21 (1979): 34–67; "'Eliza, Queene of shepheardes' and the Pastoral of Power," *English Literary Renaissance* 10 (1980): 153–82; "Of Gentlemen and Shepherds: The Politics of Elizabethan Pastoral Form," *ELH* 50 (1983): 415–59. See also Richard Helgerson, "The New Poet Presents Himself: Spenser and the Idea of a Literary Career," *PMLA* 93 (1978): 893–911; David L. Miller, "Authorship, Anonymity, and *The Shepheardes Calender*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 40 (1979): 219–36.
4. The whole passage may cheer those who find or have found *The Shepheardes Calender* hard going:

Spenser begins one of his pastorals with studied barbarity:

Diggon Davie, I bid her good-day:  
Or, Diggon her is, or I missay.  
Dig. Her was her while it was day-light,  
But now her is a most wretched wight.  
["September," lines 1–4]

What will the reader imagine to be the subject on which speakers like these exercise their eloquence? Will he not be somewhat disappointed, when he finds them met together to condemn the corruptions of the church of Rome? Surely, at the same time that a shepherd learns theology, he may gain some acquaintance with his native language.

From *The Rambler* 37 (24 July 1750), in *The Works of Samuel Johnson* (New Haven, 1958–), vol. 3, *The Rambler* (vol. 1), ed. W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss (1969), 203.

5. When Gascoigne revised *100 Sundry Flowers* and published it, in 1575, as *Posies*, this prefatory fiction, which had been presented in a brief "The Printer to the Reader," was replaced by more extensive prefaces by Gascoigne himself that reflect the anxieties of mid-Tudor authorship in a different mode. Epistles first "To the Reverend Divines" and then "To all young gentlemen, and generally to the youth of England" are full of moral professions and self-exculpation; they introduce a revised and rearranged version of *100 Sundry Flowers* that includes a new version (less modified than Gascoigne claims) of the scandalizing "Tale of Master F.J."

Gascoigne apparently made these additions and changes under threat of censorship, which took effect in 1576, when *Posies* was banned and copies were confiscated. For analysis and clarification of this episode, see Richard C. McCoy, "Gascoigne's *Poëmata castrata*": The Wages of Courtly Success," *Criticism* 27 (1985): 29–55.

6. The significance of this epithet is apparent when E.K. praises Gascoigne. In the gloss to "November," he calls him "a wittie gentleman, and the very chefe of our late ryimers, who and if some partes of learning wanted not . . . no doubt would haue attayned to the excellencye of those famous Poets"; *Spenser's Minor Poems*, 113. The esteem for Gascoigne is evident, but he is nevertheless called a rhymer, a term that not only could express aesthetic scorn—as when E.K. speaks of "the rakehellie route of our ragged ryimers" (6)—but was also a term of social obloquy: in a formal complaint against Gascoigne, his creditors accused him of being, among other things, "an Atheist," "a notorious Ruffiane," "a defamed person," and "a common Rymer." See C. T. Prouty, *George Gascoigne: Elizabethan Courtier, Soldier, and Poet* (New York, 1942), 61.

Gascoigne himself expressed diffidence about claiming the title of "poet," in a passage in which he states aims similar to those of *The Shepheardes Calender*: "Although I chalenge not unto my selfe the name of an English Poet, yet may the Reader finde

oute in my wrytings, that I have more faulted in keeping the olde English wordes (*quamvis iam obsoleta*) than in borrowing of other languages, such Epithetes and Adjectives as smell of the Inkhorne"; *The Posies*, ed. John W. Cunliffe (Cambridge, 1907), 5.

7. Gascoigne was a scion of the Bedfordshire branch of a good Yorkshire family: his father was a knight, a member of Parliament, and a justice of the peace. Of Spenser's origins we know very little, but they were clearly more modest than Gascoigne's. He was born in London, attended the Merchant Taylors' School (which may mean that one of the Spensers associated with the Merchant Taylors' Company was his father), and attended Cambridge University as a sizar (poor student) in Pembroke Hall. It is impossible to know how much credence to give his later claim that he was connected with the noble Spencers of Althorp. On all these matters, see Alexander C. Judson, *The Life of Edmund Spenser* (Baltimore, 1945).
8. Recent attention to Puttenham owes much to Daniel Javitch, *Poetry and Courtliness in Renaissance England* (Princeton, 1978). Javitch's positive account of Puttenham's aesthetic—his book is in some ways what the sixteenth century would have called an "apology" for him—has prompted the more skeptical and ironic views of Montrose (above, note 2) and, among others, Frank Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley, 1984).
9. George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, ed. Gladys Doidge Willcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge, 1936), book 1, chap. 18, 38.
10. See the chapter on *The Shepheardes Calender* in Anthea Hume, *Edmund Spenser: Protestant Poet* (Cambridge, 1984)—anticipated in her "Spenser, Puritanism, and the 'Maye' Eclogue," *Review of English Studies* 20 (1969): 155–67.
11. See Patrick Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal, 1519–1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church* (Berkeley, 1979), 233–65. On "prophesyings," see Collinson's *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley, 1967), 168–90.
12. "July," lines 219–20.
13. In E.K.'s prefatory epistle to Gabriel Harvey (7), with whom Spenser formed a friendship at Cambridge and who was to some extent his intellectual ally and literary publicist; see below, note 26.
14. John Milton, *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence, Against Smectymnus* (1641), in *Complete Prose Works*, ed. Don M. Wolfe, 8 vols. (New Haven, 1953–82), 1:722–23.
15. On Grindal's letter, see Collinson, *Archbishop Grindal*, 239–46. Sidney's letter opposing the "French marriage" was written in the summer of 1579 and seems to have been one of the causes (though certainly not the only one) of his temporary exclusion from the court. It was during his rustication at Wilton House in 1580 that the *Old Arcadia* was probably written. For an interpretation of the *Old Arcadia* in this political context and an account of it as a pastoral of covert commentary, of the sort described by Puttenham, see Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison, Wis., 1984), 24–43.
16. Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (The Old Arcadia)* [OA], ed. Jean Robertson (Oxford, 1973), 40. This poem is OA 4 in *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. William A. Ringler, Jr. (Oxford, 1962).
17. David Kalstone, *Sidney's Poetry: Contexts and Interpretations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), 52.
18. G. Gregory Smith, ed., *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1904), 1:47. Gascoigne's brief treatise, which is mostly concerned with meter and verse form, first appeared in *Posies* (1575; see above note 5).

19. Sidney, *Old Arcadia*, 42.
20. *Ibid.*, 41.
21. Sidney's attention to dramatic and social specification is nowhere more apparent than in his changing his mind about the social origins and status of these two Arcadian lovers, Strephon and Klaius. In the *Old Arcadia* they are identified as "stranger [i.e., foreign] shepherds," as opposed to "Arcadian-born shepherds" (245). Later we are told that "two gentlemen they were both in love with one maid of that country named Urania, thought a shepherd's daughter, but indeed of far greater birth" (328). In the revised version of the romance (known as the *New Arcadia*), Strephon and Klaius appear to be natives of Arcadia. Nevertheless, they are described by the courtiers as unusual for their learning and love devotion, the latter of which Sidney puts on display in the opening episode. See *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* [the *New Arcadia*], ed. Maurice Evans (Harmondsworth, Eng., 1977), 61–64, 83–84.
22. The sestina was probably invented by the Provençal poet Arnaut Daniel and was known to English writers because Petrarch used it. Its distinguishing feature is that it uses the same end words (not rhymes) throughout the poem to form its six six-line stanzas (hence "sestina"), which are followed by a three-line envoi, in which all six end words appear. The end words do not remain in the same order throughout the poem, but are varied according to a fixed rule. Sidney followed this rule, but Spenser adopted the simpler scheme of keeping the end words in the same order and simply rotating them, so that each in turn is the first line of a stanza. In a double sestina, the prescribed variation of the end words is run through twice, so that there are twelve stanzas, again with a concluding envoi. Petrarch wrote one double sestina (*Rime* 332), and there is a double sestina—like Sidney's, sung by two shepherds—in Sannazaro's *Arcadia* (eclogue 4).
23. "Overlaboured and sunneburnt," in E.K.'s definition; *OED* more accurately defines *forswatt* as "covered with sweat."
24. Montrose, "Of Gentlemen and Shepherds," 451–52.
25. Sidney, *Old Arcadia*, 4. The next quotation is from the paragraph introducing the first set of eclogues; *ibid.*, 56.
26. The most important of these were the neo-Latin poet Baptista Mantuanus (known in England as "Mantuan") and Clément Marot, a Protestant and the leading poet of the court of François Ier. Mantuan published (1498) a book of *Eclogues* (ten in number, like those of his fellow Mantuan, Virgil) that became famous all over Europe and was a standard school text. Spenser imitates some of these poems in the July, September, and October eclogues of *The Shepheardes Calender*. Marot translated Virgil's *Eclogue* 1 and wrote four vernacular eclogues of his own, two of which (written in the 1530s) Spenser imitates in his "November" and "December" eclogues.  
I take the word *overgo* from Gabriel Harvey, who spoke of Spenser's ambition to "emulate" and "overgo" Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* in *The Faerie Queene*. This remark appears in a piece of literary publicity Spenser and Harvey promulgated in 1580: *Three Proper, and wittie, familiar Letters: Lately passed betwene two Vniuersitie men*, in Spenser, *Poetical Works*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Sélincourt (Oxford, 1912), 628.
27. Cited in *OED*; italics mine.
28. G. K. Hunter, *John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), chap. 1; reprinted in Paul J. Alpers, ed., *Elizabethan Poetry: Modern Essays in Criticism* (New York, 1967).

*Fabula and Historia: The Crisis of the  
"Universall Consideration" in The  
Unfortunate Traveller*

EDITOR'S NOTE : Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) is one of the great enigmas of English Renaissance literature. Written in self-advertising, rhetorically excessive style, Nashe's tale of the adventures of Jack Wilton, a disreputable, resourceful servant, zanily blends actual historical events and personages of the early sixteenth century—the Earl of Surrey, Thomas More, Erasmus, and so forth—with grotesque and violent fantasies. The work's brilliance is widely acknowledged, but it is a brilliance that seems marginal, peculiar, and anomalous.

To give the reader who is unfamiliar with *The Unfortunate Traveller* some taste of Nashe's strange style, we quote a portion of the account of the slaughter of the Munster Anabaptists:

That day come, flourishing entered John Leyden the botcher<sup>a</sup> into the field with a scarf made of lists,<sup>b</sup> like a bow case; a cross on his breast like a thread bottom; a round, twilted<sup>c</sup> tailor's cushion buckled like a tankard bearer's device to his shoulders for a target,<sup>d</sup> the pike whereof was a pack needle;<sup>e</sup> a tough prentice's club for his spear; a great brewer's cow<sup>f</sup> on his back for a corselet; and on his head for a helmet a huge high shoe with the bottom turned upward, embossed as full of hobnails as ever it might stick. His men were all base handicrafts, as cobblers and curriers and tinkers, whereof some had bars of iron, some hatchets, some cool staves,<sup>g</sup> some dung forks, some spades, some mattocks, some wood knives, some adzes for their weapons. . . . Very devout asses they were, for all they were so dunstically set forth, and such as thought they knew as much of God's mind as richer men. Why, inspiration was their ordinary familiar, and buzzed in their ears like a bee in a box every hour—what news from heaven, hell, and the land of Whipperginny?<sup>h</sup> Displease them who durst; he should have his mittimus to damnation ex tempore. They would vaunt there was not a pea's difference twixt them and the Apostles. They were as poor as they, of as base trades as they, and no more inspired than they; and with God there is no respect of persons. . . . Peace, peace there in the belfry; service begins. Upon their knees before they join false John Leyden and his fraternity, very devoutly they pray, they howl, they expostulate with God to grant them victory, and use such unspeakable vehemence a man would think them the only well-bent men under heaven. . . . Pitiful and lamentable was their unpitied, and well-performed slaughter. To see even a bear (which is the most cruelest of all beasts) too, too bloodily overmatched and deformedly rent in pieces by an unconscionable number of curs, it would move compassion against kind and

make those that, beholding him at the stake yet uncoped with, wished him a suitable death to his ugly shape, now to recall their hardhearted wishes and moan him suffering as a mild beast, in comparison of the foul-mouthed mastiffs his butchers. Even such compassion did those overmatched ungracious Münsterians obtain of many indifferent eyes, who now thought them, suffering, to be as sheep brought innocent to the shambles, whereas before they deemed them as a number of wolves up in arms against the shepherds. The imperials themselves that were their executioners (like a father that weeps when he beats his child, yet still weeps and still beats) not without much ruth and sorrow prosecuted that lamentable massacre. Yet drums and trumpets, sounding nothing but stern revenge in their ears, made them so eager that their hands had no leisure to ask counsel of their effeminate eyes. Their swords, their pikes, their bills, their bows, their calivers slew, empierced, knocked down, shot through, and overthrew as many men every minute of the battle as there falls ears of corn before the scythe at one blow. Yet all their weapons so slaying, empiercing, knocking down, shooting through, overthrowing, dis(soul)-joined not half so many as the hailing thunder of their great ordnance. So ordinary at every footstep was the imbrument of iron in blood that one could hardly discern heads from bullets, or clotted hair from mangled flesh hung with gore. This tale must at one time or other give up the ghost, and it is as good now as stay longer. I would gladly rid my hands of it cleanly if I could tell how, for what with talking of cobblers and tinkers and ropemakers and botchers and dirt daubers, the mark is clean gone out of my muse's mouth; and I am, as it were, more than duncified twixt divinity and poetry. What is there more as touching this tragedy that you would be resolved of? Say quickly, for now my pen is got upon his feet again. How J. Leyden died? Is that it? He died like a dog. He was hanged and the halter paid for. For his companions, do they trouble you? I can tell you they troubled some men before, for they were all killed, and none escaped . . . Hear what it is to be Anabaptists, to be Puritans, to be villains. You may be counted illuminate botchers for a while; but your end will be, "Good people, pray for me."

—From *The Unfortunate Traveller*, in *Elizabethan Prose Fiction*, ed. Merritt Lawlis (New York, 1967), pp. 466–74.

[a. Jan Beuckelssen, popularly known as Jan of Leyden, and other Anabaptists gained control of Munster in 1534, but imperial troops overthrew them in 1535 and restored Catholicism. b. Lists: the edges of some material, like broadcloth. c. Twilted: quilted. d. Target: shield. e. Pack needle: large needle used to sew up packages in heavy cloth. f. Brewer's cow: possibly a wooden tub or cowl in which malt liquors were made. g. Cool staves: probably cowl or tub staves. h. A word of several meanings (all of which Jack may mean to suggest): purgatory, loose woman, and a card game. i. Bear: the image is from the Elizabethan sport of bear-baiting. j. Calivers: lightweight muskets.]

Let me begin with a question which the wording of my title may have provoked already: Is it at all possible, and if so to what extent, to use a concept like "the universall consideration," derived as it is from Sidney's *Defence of Poesie*, in reference to Thomas Nashe's narrative? Even to ask this question is to remember that in recent years critics have become exceedingly reluctant to use concepts of universality or totality in literary discourse. At this late date, the idealism of universals and, even, the Hegelian tradition in Lukács's version of the particular

and the universal, not to mention that of appearance and 'essence,' have been subjected to some incisive and, I think, challenging criticism. But as the current vogue of deconstruction gradually affects the historical domains of Renaissance scholarship, all notions of totality—then and now—tend to appear as a mere liability, and the viewing together of words-and-things, speaking-as-being, writing-as-living, etc., is dismissed almost as a nineteenth-century aberration. But if between text and voice, rhetoric and representation there is nothing (and never has been anything) but an abyss, how are we to account for some of the multiple functions and hybrid strategies in Renaissance prose narrative? How, for instance, to account for the fact that there do exist important links as well as gaps between *fabula* and *historia*, the two discursive strategies outlined in Renaissance poetics.

In this connection to recall "the universall consideration" is not, of course, to underestimate the gulf existing between Sidney's Aristotelian theory and a good deal of Elizabethan narrative practice. According to Sir Philip Sidney, "*Poesie* dealeth with . . . the universall consideration, and the *Historie* with . . . the particular"; and while the particularizing historian is "captivated to the truth of a foolish world" and, hence, "bound to tell things as things were," the poet, according to high Renaissance doctrine, is more philosophically concerned not with what is but with "the divine consideration of what may be and should be." It is the task of the privileged "*Vates*," then, and not that of the historian or the philosopher, "in the excellentest language" to treat "the fained Image of Poetrie" in terms of a more universally valid idea of beauty, virtue, coherence, or propriety.<sup>1</sup>

What makes the neoclassical position in Renaissance poetics so revealing and, at the same time, so vulnerable is that this differentiation in the functions of poetical and historiographical modes of discourse presupposed the differing correlations between words and things, writing and experience. Since the tidiness of these differentiations is treated very roughly in some of the narrative texts themselves, and especially in those flowing from the pen of writers like Nashe (not to mention Deloney, Dekker, and some of the more popular pamphleteers), the respective modes of poetic and historiographical discourse tend to affect and intertwine each other until "the fained Image of Poetrie" and "the particular truth of things"<sup>2</sup> cease to appear so diametrically opposed. The classical distinction between fictional "pictures, what should be" and true "stories what have bin"<sup>3</sup> is thoroughly inverted. In a rapidly changing social, cultural and communicative situation, the functions of discourse so tend to realign and reconstitute themselves that the traditionally sanctioned relationship between universalizing poetry and particularizing history is quite disrupted, and altogether new levels of correlation between sign and meaning, figuration and signification become a narrative possibility.

As a barren and rather incomplete formulation of my argument, this of course involves a number of oversimplifications which, I trust, will become obvious

as soon as I begin to look at some of the texts of Thomas Nashe more closely. But although in the late Renaissance the extent and the quality of the interaction between historiographic and poetic modes of discourse differs (especially so as we move from *The Unfortunate Traveller* to, say, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, *Lazarillo de Tormes*, or even *Don Quixote*), yet it is in Thomas Nashe's narrative that the irresolutions between them appear to be singularly conspicuous and even, perhaps, most precariously central. This is so, even when the author himself in his dedication attempts to link the "phantasticall" and the historical by promising to give "in this phantasticall Treatise . . . some reasonable conueyance of historie."<sup>4</sup> The use, in Nashe's own text, of 'historie' without article seems suggestive in that the narrative (or, to use Hayden White's distinction: 'narrativity')<sup>5</sup> constitutes a certain right or authority, on the part of the author, to treat within the feigned images of his story a number of actual events and persons. And indeed, within the framework of his narrative, Nashe provides an account of Henry VIII's siege of Terrouanne (or "Turwin"), describes, with an eye on Holinshed, the outbreak of the sweating sickness, proceeds to his own version of the battle of Marignano (in 1515), dwells at some length on the defeat of the Anabaptists at Munster and—last not least—has a considerable number of historical personages assembled in this "phantasticall Treatise" (among them, Luther, the Duke of Saxony, Cornelius Agrippa, Pietro Aretino, and of course, Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey). It may seem a large claim that Nashe, as G. R. Hibbard in his critical biography puts it, "had stumbled on the historical novel long before anyone else."<sup>6</sup> But by tentatively subsuming such historical material under the "fained Image" of fiction, Nashe could not but make this fiction historical and the history fictional: to interrelate, on highly uneven levels of discourse, the "phantasticall" and the historiographical, *fabula* and *historia*.

This is not the place to go into the actual situation in Elizabethan society in which the social uses of historiography were stimulated at a time when authorship could more freely relate to multiple social functions and conflicting cultural expectations, drawing as it did on both the declining institution of patronage and the as yet immature market for products of the printed press. Suffice it to say that Nashe's narrative, as far as it transcribed this situation, could be both traditional and scandalous in its respective levels of appeal, heavily stylized and, at the same time, very much down-to-earth, moving between topos and topicality, rhetoric and experience in a newly self-determined manner of authority. In this rapidly changing, transitional situation there was plenty of room for what Jonathan V. Crewe in the latest book on Nashe insists was a powerfully disruptive function of "unredeemed rhetoric," whose "violent negativity" could contaminate logic and subjugate truth.<sup>7</sup> I shall return to the important question of Nashe's rhetoric, but I want to emphasize here that the disruptive force of rhetoric in *The Unfortunate Traveller* cannot be simply opposed to historiography and rep-

resentation. If we are to grasp the cultural complexity and, as we shall see, the irresolutions of Nashe's narrative strategy, we must emphasize the multiple functions of Nashe's rhetoric and point to the concurrence as well as the contradiction between performance and historiography. As the neoclassical distinctions broke down, as the "universall consideration" ceased to fulfill the loftiness of the humanist project, and the loss of decorum, balance, and good form became irretrievable, the hybrid mode of fantastical historiography itself helped transcribe the welter of cultural possibilities and social realignments of this period. The point I want to make here is that the new rhetoric must itself be seen as participating in a historical moment of cultural change and experiment, which the combined use of poetic and historiographical modes of discourse in its turn significantly helped to constitute. The resulting relationship of words and events, discourse and history was troublesome and more contradictory than ever before, as even the biographical circumstances of Nashe's career, including his flight from London to Yarmouth, abundantly witness.\* But even though in *The Unfortunate Traveller* he kept away from the politics of the *Isle of Dogs*, the historical situation itself enabled both historiography and poetry to be more easily dissociated from their traditional social norms and functions: once combined, they could go beyond both the didactic order of Tudor chronicle and the universalizing humanist definition of poetry. The new narrative could provide "the instruments by which the conflicting claims of the imaginary and the real are mediated, arbitrated, or resolved in a discourse."<sup>8</sup>

If, in Nashe's case, the act of mediation remains structurally undeveloped, the nature of his historiographic activity is, nevertheless, fundamentally and, as G. R. Hibbard has shown, deliberately different from the chronicler's mode of representing events of the past. There is not only, in Sidney's phrase, a much greater scope of subject matter "under the authority of his pen,"<sup>9</sup> but this authority is unhesitatingly used to improve upon what Nashe believed to be, on the one hand, the undistinguished language of the chronicles and, on the other, those "feyned no where acts" in the narrative tradition of chivalric romance. In his response to the chronicles, Nashe invoked the standards of poetry, while in his objections to the "worn-out impressions" of the romance of chivalry, he invoked (as we shall see) standards of historiography, such as recording "the particular truth of things."

Though the chronicle form was close to his own point of departure in narrative, Nashe deplored its deficiency in the arts of poetry. As he wrote in *Pierce Penilesse his Supplications to the Divell*: "[your lay Chronigraphers, that write of

\*In 1597 *Isle of Dogs*, a satirical comedy that Nashe had co-authored, was condemned as seditious. The actors who had taken part in the performance were imprisoned; by order of the Privy Council, Nashe's lodgings were searched for treasonous papers. To avoid imprisonment Nashe fled to Yarmouth. —ED.



nothing but of Mayors and Sheriefts, and the deare yeere, and the great Frost] want the wings of choise words to fly to heauen, which we have: they cannot sweeten a discourse, or wrest admiration from men reading, as we can, reporting the meanest accident" (I, 194). The "we" in this text implies the superior gift of the poets, who, surprisingly, are assumed to take a position of both affinity with and distance from the chronicle mode of discourse. The *distance* is that between the wings of Nashe's own heavenly Muse and the flatness of poetical figuration in the chronicles; but this does not at all preclude a congenial, if condescending kind of affinity between the chronicler and the poet, who, apparently, through the sweetness of his own discourse is the better qualified for "reporting the meanest accident"! It is startling to find how easily Nashe, right at the outset of his writing career, is prepared to sacrifice Renaissance decorum for his fascination with historiography.

This passage from *Pierce Penilesse* is an early theoretical statement, but in his later discursive practice Nashe reveals similar positons of both vicinity and disparity between historiographic and poetic modes of discourse. As he notes in the concluding sentence of *The Unfortunate Traveller*, unless his fantastical conveyance of "historie" pleases, "I will sweare upon an English Chronicle neuer to bee out-landish Chronicler more while I liue" (II, 328). In his proudly good-humored self-mockery, Nashe confesses to be a chronicler all right, only one with a difference. For the outlandishness of his chronicling mode refers to more than the continental localities which his travelling persona visits; there is the self-assertive awareness of innovation in what he himself calls "a cleane different vaine from other my-former courses of writing" (II, 201). But the originality of the "out-landish Chronicler," although justifiably claimed, can at this date in Nashe's career be exaggerated, since similar interactions between poetic and historiographic modes of discourse can be traced much earlier in, say, *Pierce Penilesse*, or even in Nashe's satirical sketch of Gabriel Harvey in *Have with You to Saffron—Walden*, which for all its brevity has been called "the liveliest life written in England in the sixteenth century," a notable piece of biography in which fantastical figuration turns an historical person into almost "a mock-epic hero."<sup>10</sup>

Since Nashe, then, was perfectly capable of poetically "reporting the meanest accident," his own version of "the trueth of a foolish world" would refuse to acknowledge a good many traditional barriers between fictionality and reality. As an illustration, note how Nashe renders his memorable encounter, in a Cambridge inn, with his archenemy and how, in representing an actual persona and presumably real event, he uses both historical allusions and rhetorical figures to convey Harvey's stature and complexion:

It is of an adust swarth chollericke dye, like restie bacon, or a dride scate-fish; so leane and so meagre, that you wold thinke (like the Turks) he obseru'd 4. Lents in a yere, or take him for the Gentlemans man in the *Courtier*, who was so thin cheekd and gaunt and

staru'd, that, as he was blowing the fire with his mouth, the smoke tooke him vp, like a light strawe, and carried him to the top or funnell of the chimney, wher he had flowne out God knowes whether, if there had not bin crosse barres ouerwhart that stayde him; his skin riddled and crumpled like peice of burnt parchment; & more channels & creases he hath in his face than there be Fairie circles on *Salsburie Plaine*. . . . (III, 93)

This, indeed, is a fantastical conveyance of an historically existing person, whose accidental appearance is universalized into sheer comedy. Far from emancipating itself from the "duty of representation," the rhetorical art of hyperbolic figuration helps to establish a highly effective level of mediation between verbal signs, historical object and, in Charles Sanders Peirce's terminology, their interpretants. The level of mediation not only has affective force. It is effective as representation in that the process of figuration involves a much wider and more nearly universal spectrum of activities, imaginative, emotional, and empirical, than a purely factual inscription of biographical data would allow.

While in this biographical instance the art of rhetoric helps to figure forth the poetic image of an historical person, in *The Unfortunate Traveller* the images of Surrey, John Leiden, Luther, Aretino, and others, exist side by side with purely fictional figures and events. But whereas actually existing persons can—like Harvey—be metamorphosed into creatures of historical fabulation, the purely fictional characters in their turn are treated in terms of the same representational logic by which empirically verifiable vehicles serve to convey fantastical impressions of history. Compare the "crosse barres" inside the Tudor chimney (realistically barring Harvey's fantastical ascent) with the extraordinary amount of social history which goes into the building up of a purely fictional figure of *fabula*, the cider merchant in Jack Wilton's opening story:

There was a Lord in the campe, let him be a Lord of misrule if you will, for he kept a plaine alehouse without welt or gard of anie iuybush, and sold syder and cheese by pint and by pound to all that came. . . . This great Lord, this worthie Lord, this noble Lord, thought no scorne (Lord, haue mercie vpon vs) to haue his great veluet breeches larded with the droppinges of this daintie liquor, & yet he was an old seruitor, a cauelier of an ancient house, as might appeare by the armes of his ancestors, drawen verie amiably in chalke on the in side of his tent dore. (II, 210f)

The chalk used for representing the arms of noble ancestors on the inside of a tent door is, presumably, the same with which "this peer of quart pottes" was "counting his barels and setting the price in chalke on the head of them" on the day that Jack Wilton visits him. At this entirely fictional encounter the narrating poet again stoops to "reporting the meanest accident," such as "a backe room" into which Jack was led by his host, "where after he had spitte on his finger, and pickt of two or three moats of his olde moth eaten veluet cap, and spunged and wrong all the rumatike driuell from his ill fauored goats beard, he bad me declare my minde" (211).

This portrait is not the representation of an historical person, but its representational logic draws on a sense of social history which is inseparable from the violence with which the rhetoric in this narrative overthrows the postulates of decorum. For a brief, precious moment, the meanest of these accidents, such as the picking of two or three motes off his velvet cap, achieves both the exuberant status of a carnival performance of rhetorical misrule and the representational signification by which this accidental gesture mimetically serves to illuminate the embarrassing moment of expectation and apprehension before Jack Wilton's 'secret' is let out. As this strutting "Lord of misrule" is transformed into the trembling host of the campe, the memories of timeless ritual and the arts of unbounded rhetoric are used to authorize a different world, the historical world in which "*Henrie the eight* (the only true subject of *Chronicles*), aduanced his standard against the two hundred and fifty towers of *Turney* and *Turwin*" (209).

Nashe, who had scorned to consider as poetry "the feyned no where acts, of Arthur of the round table," was obviously concerned to establish a local habitation and an historical name for the meanest of narratives, including those commonly associated with the jest-book tradition. If, in this endeavor, he failed to cope with the persisting gulf between chronicled events in history (such as the advance of King Henry's standard) and the historicizing mode in fiction, the reason was obvious: the mimesis of sponging and wringing a beard in tense expectation can more easily be integrated into the representational logic of a socially and psychologically defined image of a fictive person, and even this person can more easily be associated with the historiographic setting of an army in a state of siege, than that figural language, plot, character, and setting can be conceived in terms of some comprehensive narrative strategy. But the noteworthy thing here is not the weaknesses of the links between the fantastical conveyance of *historia* and the historically concrete conveyance of *fabula* but the fact that the two are simultaneously brought to bear on the traditional context, which their joint presence doubly undermines, of a jest-book narrative of anecdotes.

In the light of this remarkable, if tentative achievement it should not come as a surprise that Nashe proceeded to apply the same historical figuration to the critical representation of discourse itself. There is in Nashe an historical awareness of the social correlatives and predeterminations of appropriated language which, in the late Elizabethan context, is unrivalled except perhaps by the art of Shakespeare's dramatic compositions. Note, first of all, how a firmly established past tense combines with the sociological vehicles in his metaphors to inspire his rhetorical raid upon the language of chivalric romance. Their authors, he notes, seek

to repaire the ruinous wals of *Venus Court*, to restore to the worlde that forgotten Legendary licence of lying, to imitate a fresh the phantastical dreames of those exiled Abbie-

lubbers, from whose idle pens proceeded those worne out impressions of the feyned no where acts, of Arthur of the round table, Arthur of little Brittain, sir Tristram . . . with infinite others. (I, 11)

Here the language of romance is criticized historically, that is, as associated with a cultural past which is firmly situated in a pre-Reformation context where the uses of allegory and chivalry are characterized by inactivity, imprecision, and depletion. For Nashe, it appears that the “forgotten Legendary licence of lying” is categorically distinct from his own liberty in the more complex use of the contradictions between factual and fictional discourses. But if the element of the “Legendary” might so easily be equated with “lying,” then Nashe himself seems to have been singularly free from the Renaissance storyteller’s sense of a dilemma between fact and fiction. His own insensitivity to the charge of lying and his disregard for any “authoritative and circumstantial proof of . . . historicity”<sup>11</sup> reveal the self-assuredness with which his innovative Muse could take the conventions of fictionality for granted. The purely fantastical figures of romance appeared unsatisfactory, not because they were fictional as such but because their naive conventions were impervious to the element of heterogeneity in the status of fact and fiction. It was only by intertwining the discursive modes of *fabula* and “historie” that Nashe’s own discourse could actually thrive on the contradiction of fictional and factual statements. Nor was Nashe, even when he anticipated in certain aspects the early-eighteenth-century “public and popular news/novels discourse,” in any way concerned about the “benefit of lying about the truthfulness of a work.”<sup>12</sup> The “idle pens” and “dreames of those exiled Abbie-lubbers” were “phantastical”; but so was, according to his self-styled definitions, his own “Treatise” called *The Unfortunate Traveller*. Obviously, then, the “licence of lying” and the liberty of inventing a “phantastical Treatise” were not the same; it was not fictionality which presented a problem but the way its contradictions were either ignored by “idle pens” or used by active spirits.

It was the social and cultural function of discourse, then, that really mattered, and it was from this point of view that Nashe ridiculed not only the pedantic language of the learned Harvey, but the failure, in the pragmatic dimension, of the petrarchan mode of figuration, as in the language of Jack Wilton’s “Heroical Master.” In prison, the two characters meet beautifully tempting Diamante, but while his master “wold praise her beyond the moone and starres,” Jack “caught the bird: simplicity and plainnesse shall carrie it away” (II, 263). Here the feigned image of poetry fails to communicate the particularities of seduction. Surrey’s unpragmatic signification precludes not only a realistic appropriation of language in the world but, equally, an appropriation of worldly lust through discourse. Surrey, we are told, “out of the incomprehensible drossie matter of cloudes and aire” thrust with his tongue “the starres out of heauen, and eclipsed the Sun and Moone with comparisons” (II, 270), before—observing “the true measures

of honour" and, of course, "glory" (278)—he indulges in the emblematic language of knighthood during the absurd tournament at Florence, culminating in the self-revealing mimesis in the allegory of the fifth knight: "*Nos quoque florimus*, as who should say, we haue bin in fashion" (274). The language of social privilege, it seems, is not as easily qualified to represent a speaker's interest as are the vulgar signs of the ordinary word.

At this point, Nashe's historical perspective on the social uses of language suggests at least two conclusions. First, his perspective on the conjuncture, not to say the totality of speaking and living, was inseparable from the historiographical and representational moment in his narrative. This perspective, it is true, could not cope with the gaps between historiography and performance, representation and rhetoric, but it was powerfully present in the attempted links, and as a link, even in face of the contradiction between the universal consideration of *fabula* and "the trueth of a foolish world." Second, it must have been impossible for Nashe to develop the historical mode of his narrative representations of the social uses of language without finally subsuming his own verbal activities under the same mode and method. To be sure, the awareness of the situatedness of his own use of language must have been limited and, more often than not, obscured by combined conventions of complaint and apology, layers of pride, delusion, and self-mockery, as when, through the thinly disguised persona of Pierce Penilesse, he speaks of his poetry as "my vulgar Muse" (I, 157). But as his own position in society was so precarious, Nashe must have been and, in fact, was inordinately attentive to the social attributes that his writings received from others. Among his contemporaries it was of course Harvey who was quick scornfully to refer to his language as that newfangled "naturall stile," with its "piperly phrases and tinkerly compositions," as derived from "Tarletons surmounting Rhetorique, with a little Euphuisme, and Greenesse inough,"<sup>13</sup> by which that "gosling of the Printing-house" made up "the whole ruffianisme of [his] brothel Muse."<sup>14</sup> Nashe in his turn must have been self-consciously aware of the weight of such charges, as when he defends himself by the argument, remarkable for its perhaps unintended implications, that "there is no newfangelnes in mee but pouertie" (III, 31). As Nashe accepts "newfangelnes" as a correct rating of his discursive practice, he applies comparable criteria of historical function to the actually produced writings of his own pen that he had used for his previous critique of the lack of representational content in the language of chivalric romance or, for that matter, for the language associated with the physical gestures and complexions of his biographical and fictional characters. Thus, he relates the "newfangled" nature of his pen (30) to a concrete situation of social independence and poverty "which alone maketh mee so unconstant to my determined studies" (31).

The contemporary realities of his author-function, the peculiar conditions under which literary texts would be sold or dedicated, appropriated as well as

expropriated, obviously mattered to Thomas Nashe, and he used them as both a constant source of complaint and a vehicle of the freedom by which his authorship came to constitute and rely upon an authority distinctly his own. In this respect, Nashe (for all his political conservatism) was indeed a modernist, and Harvey's judgment appears highly discriminating: "The witt of this and that odd Modernist is theyr owne."<sup>15</sup> To possess one's own wit, to have (as Nashe by implication postulates) "inuenton or matter . . . of [one's] owne" (II, 251), is to appropriate the means and modes of his own poetic labor and thereby fulfill the condition on which the neoclassical poetic becomes obsolete. In the traditional dedication, prefixed to *The Unfortunate Traveller*, just before proceeding to address his commercial audience, he triumphantly states the joys and promises of innovation which this narrative (so different from his previous writings) seems either to anticipate or to have at least partially fulfilled: "a new brain, a new wit, a new stile, a new soule will I get mee" (II, 202)—a bold promise in which writing and being are envisioned as newly indivisible.

But if, out of the constraints of a socially most precarious position, Nashe with his "Mercuriall fingers" proudly snatched a modicum of freedom and experiment, the full weight of the contradiction between *fabula* and *historia* could not, for all its originality, finally be held in suspension in *The Unfortunate Traveller*. It is true, there was his moment of triumph through innovation, as when he began to break down barriers between traditional types of discourse, moving as he did from criticism, theology, history to the jest-book and the pamphlet, and from there back and forward towards that undefined and, for him, largely unknown mode of modern fictionality which sought to align the imaginary and the real through the integration in one "tale," of the most heterogeneous modes of discursive practice. This no doubt is the achievement, as far as it goes, of *The Unfortunate Traveller*, which—in narrative form—equalled that remarkable synthesis in the drama which Lyly in his preface to *Midas* had defined in terms of a similar social signification. Relating the latest "mingle-mangle" in the "object," "subject," and the audience of drama to the Elizabethan "Hodge-podge" situation, Lyly had noted how a changing world affects the matter as well as the language of poetry, and how it breaks up previously valid distinctions among poetic forms and conventions: "Time hath confounded our mindes, our mindes the matter; but all commeth to this passe, that what heretofore has been served in several dishes for a feaste, is now minced in a charger for a Gallimaufrey."<sup>16</sup> This, as I have shown elsewhere, is most revealing in terms of the history of Elizabethan drama, but Lyly's younger colleague Tom Nashe might have traced a similar "Gallimaufrey" in narrative, a "mingle-mangle" of poetry, divinity, and history, and he too might have wondered how deeply "Time" affects consciousness, and consciousness the "matter" and, of course, the language of narrative. Only, the exuberance in the rhetoric of gallimaufrey, by which language represents its own

functioning moment in history, is not Nashe's own; although he too confronted the challenge of social and cultural change, the odds were much more strongly against him. In the language of narrative, the sheer burden of integration was so much heavier; perhaps it was easy in theory to transcend the classifications of neoclassical doctrine, but practically to cope with the desperately experimental and unashamedly hybrid nature of the verbal alternative in narrative called for a greater genius or a more sheltered situation in society. Note the playful admission of failure when Nashe *in propria persona* usurps the first person singular viewpoint of his medium and says:

This tale must at one time or other giue vp the ghost, and as good now as stay longer; I would gladly rid my handes of it cleanly, if I could tell how, for what with talking of coblers, tinkers, roape-makers, botchers, and durt-daubers, the mark is clean out of my Muses mouth, & I am as it were more than duncified twixt diuinity and poetrie. (II, 241)

The classical tradition behind Thomas Nashe's not-so-vulgar "Muse" has not ceased to revolt against the historical representation of "coblers, tinkers, roape-makers" and the meanest accidents of their political history. Is, then, the re-emerging gulf between poetry and history finally one which, for Nashe, remains unbridgeable?

In conclusion I propose somewhat more closely to look at this statement, which comes at the end of Nashe's account of the Anabaptists' rule at Munster, when the difficulties in the way of integrating divinity, history, and story appear insuperable. The apparent incongruity between historical-theological pamphlet and fictional "tale" seems bewildering, as the self-consciously described dichotomy between the two heterogeneous levels of discourse betrays. For Nashe to say that he is "duncified twixt diuinity and poetrie" is, on the surface, to dramatize the central difficulty arising out of the combination of two distinct strategies of discourse and the two differing modes of structuring (historical-theological pamphlet and fictional story) respectively. The question for Nashe is how to integrate the fiction of the travelling page, a purely imaginary invention, and the nonfiction of the anti-Puritan pamphlet which contains the historical account and the theological critique of the German Anabaptist rising at Munster. The failure to provide a link in narrative between the two is dramatized as some utterly perplexing rupture; for the humanist-trained author, his classical "Muse" appears incapable still of stooping to accommodate "the meanest accident." The privileged images of poetry are still worlds apart from "the trueth of a foolish world" as historically inscribed in the vulgar language of "coblers, tinkers, roape-makers" at a crucial moment of their plebeian destiny.

To say that the confrontation between the two narrative strategies is dramatized is of course to draw attention to an element of unresolved conflict inherent in the author's attempt to define the contradictions within his own perfor-

mance. Upon closer inspection, the dramatized rhetoric of despair relates to an undecided conflict between privilege and representation, in the sense that the privileged vocation of poetry appears incompatible with a representation of ordinary multitudes. If "talking of cobblers, tinkers, roape-makers" is "clean out of [his] Muses mouth," then Nashe's embarrassment is such that the vulgar language of historiography still appears unsuited to the poetic fiction of his story. Again, the privileges of a neoclassical education do not appear conducive to the particularizing practice of representation.

At this point, the privilege of poetry *and* the representation of vulgarity are mutually suspended in Nashe's uses of rhetoric as communicating, through the author's voice, a stylized version of his difficulties in projecting the combined effects of two simultaneous discursive strategies. For undoubtedly there is, on the self-representational surface of this verbal action, an autobiographical element of real confusion and perplexity, as witnessed by the use, in this context, of the verb 'duncified.' But although, at this level of autobiographically voiced perplexity, Nashe "would gladly rid [his] handes" of this tale, his putative despair ("if I could tell how") itself appears as somewhat fictive. In fact, the rhetorical figure through which the dilemma between poetry and historiography is communicated serves to undermine the privilege as well as the validity of the classical distinction between poetry and divinity. For to use the verb "duncified" in this connection is to interrogate the dramatized statement of the humanist's dilemma and to suggest, from within its fictional level of self-representation, a counter-current of continuing experiment, innovation, and integration. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the verb "dunce" is used in the sense of "to puzzle, pose, prove to be a dunce; to make a dunce of." But by adding the suffix *duncify* (as derived from, or in analogy to, Lat. *-ficare* and/or French *-fier*), the implied sense of "bringing into a certain state" can be given a jocular or trivial, or even vulgar overtone. This, of course, would correspond with the odd mixture of complaint and self-mockery that Nashe, from the introduction to *Pierce Penilesse* to his *Lenten Stuff*, uses throughout his writing. And yet, the element of self-mockery is not, I think, to be read exclusively as yet another self-conscious touch of the popular performer. For the underlying thrust of his self-representational action is such that the use of a word like "duncified," through its historical vehicle or signifier, cancels or at least balances the autobiographical level at which the neoclassical "Muse" seeks to reassert the privileged content of its (her?) universalizing "pictures, what should be." I say 'historical vehicle,' because "duncified" carries with it an historical referent in the person of John Duns Scotus, the scholastic theologian, the Subtle Doctor of medieval Oxford, whose works on theology, philosophy, and logic must have been familiar to any Elizabethan university graduate, either as outdated textbooks or some traditionally sanctioned authority. In the sixteenth century the scholastic system of the Subtle Doctor was repeatedly



attacked and ridiculed by both humanists and reformers, even while the Scotists or Dunsmen (as they were called) rallied against the aggressive polemic of the new learning. The point is not simply that Thomas Nashe, humanist-trained author, was anti-Scotist from his early days in Cambridge, at least as early as 1589, when in his preface to Robert Green's *Menaphon* he attacked the pragmatic orientation in "the doting practice of our Diunitie Dunces" (III, 318). The point is, rather, that Nashe's long-standing opposition to scholastic learning must have suffused the metaphoric language of his self-dramatization, in the sense that the noun 'dunce' had become synonymous with 'hair-splitter' and 'cavilling sophist' as in reference to that "farrago of needless entities and useless distinctions" (*OED*) which the Scotist system had become associated with.

When, therefore, in a curious mixture of circumspection and emphasis, Nashe says, "I am as it were more than a little duncified twixt diunity and poetrie," he transforms in his self-mocking fashion the jocular language of antischolasticism (with its critique of "needless entities and useless distinctions") into a provocation of humanist doctrine. Insofar as the signifying vehicle of 'duncified' turns out to have a well-known historical referent, the very mode of Nashe's self-representation adopts a highly ambivalent strategy by which the humanist position in poetics itself is severely interrogated: signifier and signified, the scholastic vehicle and the humanist tenor are so inverted that, for a brief rhetorical moment, from within the metaphorical transaction we have the new relationship of figure and history inscribed into the ambivalent process of signification itself. For the historical referent of "needless entities and useless distinctions" is projected upside-down onto the humanist distinction between poetry and history itself. Just as Nashe practically and structurally fails to cope with the new multiplicity of narrative functions, so the re-emerging gulf between pamphlet and tale, history and story is undermined from within the rhetorical figure used to convey the impossible difficulties in effectively bridging it. To put it differently, the irresolutions between the transcription of actual events and the language of pure fiction, between voice and text, historiography and fabulation are projected into the structure of his own mode of figuration and, from there, into the ambivalent circuit of his signification.

Looking at the whole complex text of *The Unfortunate Traveller*, the conclusion may be submitted that even the partially effective interaction between "Poetrie" and "Historie" involves some new level of correlation between the discursive practice in the world of the story and the actual function of this practice (and this story) in the world of history. The new narrative opens a newly totalizing perspective on the links and gaps between poetics and politics, privilege and repression, which points beyond the idealistic version of neoclassical universality. As far as the appropriation of the world in the text could now more effectively be linked with the appropriation of the text in the world, there results in the

writing and in the reading a more intense kind of interaction between the feigning element of *factio* and the element of actuality in the representations of history: The privilege behind the “fained Images” of self-invented story and the representation of the “trueth of a foolish world” engage in a troublesome relationship which challenges, even when it does not bridge, the rupture between speaking and being, writing and living. Thus, the production and reception of Nashe’s narrative become, at least potentially, a literary form of historical activity by which “the particular truth of things,” at the very moment of its suspension in fictionality, is universalized into its own indeterminate future as a reusable vehicle of the temporal imagination.

## Notes

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1. *The Prose Works of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Cambridge, 1912), III, 10–18.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
4. *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow (London, 1904–10), II, 201. All further references to his edition are contained in my text.
5. Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” *Critical Inquiry* 7 (Autumn, 1980), p. 6f.
6. G. R. Hibbard, *Thomas Nashe. A Critical Introduction* (London, 1962), p. 145.
7. Jonathan V. Crewe, *Unredeemed Rhetoric. Thomas Nashe and the Scandal of Authorship* (Baltimore, 1982), p. 22, et passim. In his stimulating discussion of the subversive function of “rhetorical excess,” Crewe himself notes “that Nashe succumbs to history” (p. 25). There is no point, then, in minimizing the “mass of recorded experience” rendered, often enough, with “the immediacy of spoken discourse” (Walter R. Davis, *Idea and Act in Elizabethan Fiction* [Princeton, N. J., 1969], pp. 216, 218), which went hand in hand with Nashe’s “powers of observation and . . . his respect for the facts observed” (Hibbard, *Thomas Nashe*, p. 80). This constitutes a new type of authority in the narrative and inspires at least one of the functions of his rhetoric. I have commented on the historical uses (and constellations) of such rhetoric in “‘Fictionality’ and Realism: Rabelais to Barth,” *The Uses of Fiction: Essays on the Modern Novel in Honour of Arnold Kettle*, eds. Douglas Jefferson and Graham Martin (Milton Keynes, 1982), 9–30.
8. White, “Value of Narrativity,” p. 8. 9. Sidney, *Prose Works*, III, 18. 10. Hibbard, *Thomas Nashe*, pp. 223f.
11. William Nelson, *Fact or Fiction: The Dilemma of the Renaissance Storyteller* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), p. 19.
12. Leonard J. Davis, “A Social History of Fact and Fiction: Authorial Disavowal in the Early English Novel,” *Literature and Society. Selected Papers from the English Institute*, ed. Edward W. Said (Baltimore, 1980), pp. 144, 121.
13. Gabriel Harvey, *Third Letter*; cf. *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith (London, 1904), II, 278, 431.

14. Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces Superrogation*; cf. *ibid.*, II, 257ff.
15. *Ibid.*, II, 277; cf. p. 255, where, in reference to Nashe's "Mercuriall fingers," he ridicules "the Archmystery of the busiest Modernistes."
16. *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, ed. R. W. Bond (Oxford, 1902), III, 115. Harvey, incidentally, refers to his controversy with Nashe in similar terms: "The very whole matter . . . what but a hotch-pott for a gallymafry?" (*Elizabethan Critical Essays*, II, 253.)

## “Who does the wolf love?” Reading *Coriolanus*\*

SOMETHING THAT DRAWS me to *Coriolanus* is its apparent disdain of questions I have previously asked of Shakespearean tragedy, taking tragedy as an epistemological problem, a refusal to know or to be known, an avoidance of acknowledgment, an expression (or imitation) of skepticism. Coriolanus's refusal to acknowledge his participation in finite human existence may seem so obviously the fact of the matter of his play that to note it seems merely to describe the play, not at all to interpret it. It may be, however, that this lack of theoretical grip itself proposes a moral, or offers a conclusion, namely that *Coriolanus* is not exactly to be understood as a tragedy, that its mystery—supposing one agrees to something like a mystery in its events—will be located only in locating its lack or missing of tragedy, hence its closeness to tragedy.

But systematically to pursue this possibility would require—from me—following out a sense that this play presents a particular interpretation of the problem of skepticism as such (skepticism directed toward our knowledge of the existence of others), in particular an interpretation that takes skepticism as a form of narcissism. This interpretation does not in itself come to me as a complete surprise since a book I published a few years ago—*The Claim of Reason*—begins with an interpretation of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* which takes his move against the idea of a private language (an idea which arises in his struggle against skepticism) as a move against a kind of narcissism, a kind of denial of an existence shared with others; and my book ends with a reading of *Othello* as a depiction of the murderous lengths to which narcissism must go in order to maintain its picture of itself as skepticism, in order to maintain its stand of ignorance, its fear or avoidance of knowing, under the color of a claim to certainty.<sup>1</sup> What surprised me more in *Coriolanus* was its understanding of narcissism as another face of incestuousness, and of this condition as one in which language breaks down under the sense of becoming incomprehensible, of the sense of oneself as having lost the power of expression, what I call in the *Claim of Reason* the terror of inexpressiveness; together with the thoroughness with which Narcissus's fate is mirrored in the figure of Coriolanus, a figure whose every act is, by that act, done to him so perfectly that the distinction between action and passion seems to lose its sense, a condition in which human existence becomes precarious, if perhaps transcendable. I mention these connections with the philosophical issue of skepticism not because I pursue them further in the essay to follow but only to attest my conviction

tion that a work such as a play of Shakespeare's cannot contribute the help I want from it for the philosophical issues I mention, unless the play is granted the autonomy it is one's power to grant, which means, seen in its own terms. What does this mean? What is a play of Shakespeare's? I will try to say something about these questions.

Something else also draws me. The way I have been understanding the conflicts the play engenders keeps sending me back over paths of thought that I believe many critics have found to be depleted of interest, or conviction; three paths, or branches of paths, in particular: (1) those that look in a Shakespearean play for something like an idea of theater, as it were for the play's concept of itself; (2) those that sense Christian stirrings and murmurings under the surface of the words; and (3) even those paths of thought that anticipate something you might call the origins of tragedy in religious ritual. I am, I suppose, as drawn to critical paths that others find empty as some poets are to words that others find flat. But to say fully why one is drawn to a work, and its work of interpretation, can only be the goal of an interpretation; and the motive of an interpretation, like what one might call the intention of the work it seeks, exists fully only in its satisfaction.

I expect, initially, general agreement on two facts about *Coriolanus*. First, compared with other Shakespearean tragedies this one lacks what A. C. Bradley called "atmosphere" (in his British Academy Lecture on the play, the decade after his *Shakespearean Tragedy*). Its language, like its hero, keeps aloof from our attention, as withdrawn, austere, as its rage and its contempt permit. Second, the play is about the organization of the body politic and about how that body is fed, that is, sustained. I expect, further, that readers from opposed camps should be willing to see that the play lends itself equally, or anyway naturally, to psychological and to political readings: both perspectives are, for example, interested in who produces food and in how food is distributed and paid for. From a psychological perspective (in practice this has in recent years been psychoanalytic) the play directs us to an interest in the development of Coriolanus's character. From a political perspective the play directs us to an interest in whether the patricians or the plebeians are right in their conflict and in whether, granted that Coriolanus is unsuited for political leadership, it is his childishness or his very nobility that unsuits him.

In the critical discussions I have read so far, the psychoanalytic perspective has produced more interesting readings than the political. A political reading is apt to become fairly predictable once you know whose side the reader is taking, that of the patricians or that of the plebeians; and whose side the reader takes may come down to how he or she sees Menenius's fable of the organic state, the Fable of the Belly, and upon whom he or she places the blame for Coriolanus's banishment. If few will consider it realistic to suppose that Coriolanus would have made a good political leader, fewer will deny that in losing him the city has lost its greatest hero and that this loss is the expression of a time of crisis in the state. It is a time of famine in which the call for revolt is made moot by the threat and the fact of war and invasion, followed

by a time in which victory in the war, and bitterness over its conduct, creates the call for counter-revolt by the state's defender and preserver. In such a period of crisis everyone and no one has good arguments, everyone and no one has right on their side. In Aufidius's great description of Coriolanus at the end of Act IV he summarizes:

So our virtues  
Lie in th'interpretation of the time; . . .  
One fire drives out one fire; one nail, one nail;  
Rights by rights founder, strengths by strengths do fail.

One might say that just this division of fire and right is the tragedy, but would that description account for the particular turns of just these events, as distinct from the losses and ironies in any revolutionary situation? Even the most compelling political interpretation—in my experience this is given in Bertolt Brecht's discussion with members of his theater company of the opening scene of the play<sup>2</sup>—seems to have little further to add, in the way of interpretation, once it makes clear that choosing the side of the plebeians is dramatically and textually viable. This is no small matter. It shows that Shakespeare's text—or what we think of as Shakespeare's humanity—leaves ample room for distinctions among the "clusters" of citizens, and it shows the weight of their common position in opposition to that of the patricians. And I take this in turn to show that the politics of the play is essentially the politics of a given production, so that we should not expect its political issues to be settled by an interpretation of what you might call "the text itself."

Exactly the power of Brecht's discussion can be said to be its success in getting us *not* to interpret, not, above all, to interpret food, but to stay with the opening fact of the play, the fact that the citizens of Rome are in revolt because there is a famine (and because of their interpretation of the famine). They and their families are starving and they believe (correctly, for all we know) that the patricians are hoarding grain. Not to interpret this means, in practical or theatrical terms, that we come to see that this cluster is of human beings, individual human beings, who work at particular trades and who live in particular places where specific people await news of the outcome of their dangerous course in taking up arms. This fact of their ordinary humanity is the most impressive fact that can be set against the patricians' scorn of them—a fact that ought not to be visible solely to a Marxist, a fact that shows up the language of the leaders as mysterious and evasive, as subject to what one may think of as the politics of interpretation.

Yet we also feel that the pervasive images of food and hunger, of cannibalism and of disgust, do mean something, that they call upon us for some lines of interpretation, and that the value of attending to this particular play is a function of the value to individual human beings of tracing these lines.

Psychoanalysts naturally have focussed on the images of food and feeding that link Coriolanus and his mother. In a recent essay, "‘Anger's My Meat’: Feeding,

Dependency, and Aggression in *Coriolanus*,<sup>73</sup> Janet Adelman has given so clear and fair an account of some two decades of psychoanalytic interpretations of food and feeding in the play, in the course of working out her further contributions, that I feel free to pick and choose the lines and moments bearing this aspect of things that serve my somewhat different emphases.

Twice Volumnia invokes nursing. Early she says to Virgilia, rebuking her for worrying about her husband:

The breasts of Hecuba  
When she did suckle Hector, looked not lovelier  
Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood  
At Grecian sword, contemning.

(I.iii.43–46)

And in her first intercession with her son:

Do as thou list.  
Thy valiantness was mine, thou suck'st it from me,  
But owe thy pride thyself.

(III.ii.127–29)

Both invocations lead one to think what it is this son learned at his mother's breast, what it is he was fed with, particularly as we come to realize that both mother and son declare themselves to be starving. It is after Coriolanus's departure upon being banished, when Menenius asks Volumnia if she'll sup with him, that she comes out with

Anger's my meat; I sup upon myself  
And so shall starve with feeding.

(IV.ii.50–51)

As Coriolanus mocks and resists the ritual of asking for the people's voices, his being keeps revolting, one time as follows:

Better it is to die, better to starve,  
Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.

(II.iii.118–19)

I say that mother and son, both of them, *are* starving, and I mean throughout, always, not just when they have occasion to say so. I take Volumnia's vision of supping upon herself not to be a picture simply of her local anger but of self-consuming anger as the presiding passion of her life—the primary thing, accordingly, she would have to teach her son, the thing he sucked from her, of course under the name of valiantness. If so, then if Volumnia, and hence Coriolanus, are taken to exemplify a Roman identification of virtue as valor, they should further be taken as identifying valor with an access to one's anger. It is “in anger, Juno-like,” godlike, that Volumnia laments (IV.ii.52–53); and it is this anger that the Tribune Sicinius is remarking as, in trying to avoid

being confronted by her, he says, "They say she's mad" (IV.ii.9). Along these lines, I emphasize Coriolanus's statement about deserving rather than craving not as

Better it is to *die*, better to *starve*,  
Than crave . . .

as if he is asserting the rightness of a particular choice for the future; but as

Better it is to *die*, *better* to *starve*,  
Than crave . . .

as if he is reaffirming or confessing his settled form of (inner) life. I expect that the former is the more usual way of emphasis, but I find it prejudicial.

Coriolanus and Volumnia are—I am taking it—starvers, hungerers. They manifest this condition as a name or a definition of the human, like being mortal. And they manifest this as a condition of insatiability (starving by feeding, feeding as deprivation). It is a condition sometimes described as the infiniteness of desire, imposing upon the finiteness of the body. But starving for Volumnia and her son suggests that this infiniteness is not the cause of human insatiability but is rather its effect. It is the effect not of an endless quantity, as though the self had, or is, endless reserves of desire; but of an endless structure, as though desire has a structure of endlessness. One picture of this structure is given by Narcissus for whom what is longed for is someone longing, who figures beauty as longing. Starving by feeding presents itself to Coriolanus as being consumed by hunger, and his words for hungering are desiring and craving. And what he incessantly hungers for is . . . not to hunger, not to desire, that is, not to be mortal. Take the scene of interview by the people:

CORIOLANUS: You know the cause, sir, of my standing here.

THIRD CITIZEN: We do, sir; tell us what hath brought you to't.

CORIOLANUS: Mine own desert.

SECOND CITIZEN: Your own desert?

CORIOLANUS: Ay, not mine own desire.

THIRD CITIZEN: How not your own desire?

(II.iii.66–72)

If you desire to be desireless, is there something you desire? If so, how would you express it; that is, tell it; that is, ask for it? Coriolanus's answer to this paradox is to become perfectly deserving. Since to hunger is to want, to lack something, he hungers to lack nothing, to be complete, like a sword. My speculations here are an effort to do justice to one's sense of Coriolanus as responding not primarily to his situation with the plebeians, as if trapped by an uncontrollable disdain; but as responding primarily to his situation with himself, as befits a Narcissus, trapped first by an uncontrollable logic. While I will come to agree with Plutarch's early observation or diagnosis in his *Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus* that Coriolanus is "altogether unfit for any man's conversation," I am in effect taking this to mean not that he speaks in anger and



contempt (anger and contempt are not unjustifiable) but that while under certain circumstances he can express satisfaction, he cannot express desire and to this extent cannot speak at all: the case is not that he will not ask for what he wants but rather that he can want nothing that he asks. His solution amounts, as both patricians and plebeians more or less note, to becoming a god. What god? We have to get to this.

Let us for the moment continue developing the paradox of hungering. To be consumed by hunger, to feed upon oneself, must present itself equally as being fed upon, being eaten up. (To feed means both to give and to take nourishment, as to suckle means both to give and to take the breast.) So the other fact of Coriolanus's and Volumnia's way of starving, of their hunger, is their sense of being cannibalized.<sup>4</sup>

The idea of cannibalization runs throughout the play. It is epitomized in the title question I have given to these remarks: "Who does the wolf love?" Menenius asks this of the Tribunes of the people at the opening of Act II. One of them answers, with undeniable truth: "The lamb." And Menenius, ever the interpretative fabulist, answers: "Ay, to devour him, as the hungry plebeians would the noble Marcius." The other Tribune's answer—"He's a lamb, indeed, that baas like a bear"—does not unambiguously deny Menenius's interpretation. The shock of the interpretation is of course that it is from the beginning the people, not the patricians, and least of all Coriolanus, who are presented as lambs, anyway as food for patrician wolves. In Menenius's opening effort to talk the people out of revolt he declares that "The helms o' the state . . . care for you like fathers," to which the First Citizen replies "Care for us! . . . If the wars eat us not up, they will; and there is all the love they bear us." This fantasy is borne out when the general Cominius speaks of Coriolanus's coming to battle as to a feast (I.ix.10). And the idea of the warrior Coriolanus feeding on a weaker species may be raised again in the battle at Corioli in his threat to any soldier who holds back, "I'll take him for a Volsce / And he shall feel mine edge," allowing the suggestion of his sword as a piece of cutlery. The idea of an ungovernable voraciousness is furthered by Volumnia's association of her son with his son's tearing apart a butterfly with his teeth. On the other hand, when Coriolanus offers himself to Aufidius at Antium he expresses his sense of having been devoured, with only the name Caius Marcius Coriolanus remaining, devoured by "the cruelty and envy of the people" (IV.v.77-78). And Menenius, whose sense of justice is constricted, among other things by his fear of civil disorder, is accurate in his fears, in the consequences they prophesy for Rome, and he will repeat his vision of civil cannibalism:

Now the good gods forbid  
That our renowned Rome, whose gratitude  
Towards her deserved children is enrolled  
In Jove's own book, like an unnatural dam  
Should now eat up her own.

(III.i.288-92)

All readers of this aspect of the play will recognize in this description of Rome as potentially a cannibalistic mother an allusion to Volumnia; and the identification of Volumnia and Rome is enforced in other ways, not least by Volumnia herself when in the second and final intercession scene she says to her son:

... thou shalt no sooner  
March to assault thy country than to tread  
(Trust to't, thou shalt not) on thy mother's womb  
That brought thee to this world.

(V.iii.121-24)

It is very much to the point to notice that in Menenius's vision of Rome as an "unnatural dam" an identity is proposed between a mother eating her child and a mother eating herself: if Rome eats up all Romans there is no more Rome, for as one of the Tribunes asks, "What is the city but the people?" (III.i.198).

The paradox and reciprocity of hungering may be found registered in the question "Who does the wolf love?" If the question is asking for the object of the wolf's affection, the more nearly correct grammar would seem to be: "Whom does the wolf love?"<sup>5</sup> But this correctness (call it a patrician correctness, a refinement in which the plebeians apparently do not see the good) would rule out taking the question also in its opposite direction, grammatically strict as it stands, namely as asking whose object of affection the wolf is (Who does love the wolf?). The answer given directly, "The lamb," does not rule out either direction, but as the ensuing discussion demonstrates, the direction will be a function of what or who you take the lamb to be, hence what the wolf. Both directions, the active and the passive constructions of the play's focal verbs, are operative throughout the action. I have mentioned this explicitly in the cases of feeding and suckling. But it is, I find, true less conspicuously, but pertinently, in such an odd moment as this:

CORIOLANUS: Let them hang.

VOLUMNIA: Ay, and burn too.

(III.ii.23-24)

One of the functions in providing Volumnia with this amplification here strikes me as suggesting her sense of the inevitable reflexiveness of action in their Rome: are hanging and burning actions done to someone, or something "they" are, or will be, doing?

The circle of cannibalism, of the eater eaten by what he or she eats, keeps being sketched out, from the first to the last. You might call this the identification of narcissism as cannibalism. From the first: at the end of Coriolanus's first long speech he says to the citizens:

"Who does the wolf love?"

You cry against the noble Senate, who  
(Under the gods) keep you in awe, which else  
Would feed on one another.

(I.i.187-89)

And at the last: Rome devouring itself is the idea covered in the obsessive images of Coriolanus burning Rome. It was A. C. Bradley again who at the end of his British Academy Lecture pointed up the sudden and relentless harping, principally after the banishment, on the image of fire, of Rome burning. Bradley makes nothing further of the point but it is worth noting, in view of the theme of starving and cannibalism, that fire in this play is imagined under the description of it as *consuming* what it burns.

You may say that burning as a form of revenge is Coriolanus's projection onto Rome of what he felt Rome was doing to him. This cannot be wrong, but it so far pictures Coriolanus, in his revenge, to be essentially a man like Aufidius, merely getting even; the picture requires refining. Suppose that, as I believe, in Coriolanus's famous sentence of farewell, "I banish you!" (III.iii.123), he has already begun a process of consuming Rome, incorporating it, becoming it. Then when the general Cominius tried in vain to plead with him to save Rome, and found him to be "sitting in gold, his eye / Red as 'twould burn Rome" (Vi.63-64), he somewhat misunderstood what he saw. He took Coriolanus to be contemplating something in the future whereas Coriolanus's eye was red with the present flames of self-consuming. Consuming the literal Rome with literal fire would accordingly only have been an expression of that self-consuming. Thus would the city understand what it had done to itself. He will give it—horribly—what it deserves. Thus is the play of revenge further interpreted.

These various understandings of cannibalism all illustrate the ancient sentiment that man is wolf to man. (The Roman Plautus, to whom Shakespeare is famously indebted, is credited with being the earliest nameable framer of the sentiment. A pertinent modern instance occurs in Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*.) But the question "Who does the wolf love?" has two further reaches which we must eventually consider. First, there is the repetition of the idea that devouring can be an expression of love. Second, if, as I think, there is reason here to take the image of the wolf as the figure of the mythical animal identified with Rome, the one who suckled the founders of Rome (Volumnia is the reason), there is reason to take the lamb it is said to love (or that loves it) as the mythical animal identified with Christ.

Before this, I should make explicit a certain way in which the account of Coriolanus's motivation I have been driving at is somewhat at odds with the direction of psychoanalytic interpretation summarized and extended in Adelman's essay. She understands Coriolanus's attempt to make himself inhumanly independent as a defense against his horror of dependence, and his rage as converting his wish to be dependent against those who render him so. A characteristic turn of her argument consists of a reading of some lines I have already had occasion to quote:

The breasts of Hecuba  
When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier  
Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood  
At Grecian sword, contemning.

Adelman reads as follows:

Blood is more beautiful than milk, the wound than the breast, warfare than peaceful feeding. . . . Hector is transformed immediately from infantile feeding mouth to bleeding wound. For the unspoken mediator between breast and wound is the infant's mouth: in this imagistic transformation, to feed is to be wounded; the mouth becomes the wound, the breast the sword. . . . But at the same time as Volumnia's image suggests the vulnerability inherent in feeding, it also suggests a way to fend off that vulnerability. In her image, feeding, incorporating, is transformed into spitting out, an aggressive expelling; the wound once again becomes the mouth that spits. . . . The wound spitting blood thus becomes not a sign of vulnerability but an instrument of attack. (p. 131)

This is very fine and it must not be denied. But the transformation of Hector's mouth into a wound must not in turn deny two further features of these difficult lines. First, when Hector contemns Grecian swords, he is also to be thought of as fighting, as wielding a sword, so the mouth is transformed into, or seen as, a cutting weapon: the suckling mother is presented as being slashed by the son-hero, eaten by the one she feeds. Suffering such a fantasy would constitute some of Volumnia's more normal moments. Second, the lines set up an equation between a mother's milk and a man's blood, suggesting that we must understand the man's spitting blood in battle not simply as attacking but equally, somehow, as providing food, in a male fashion. But how? Remember that Coriolanus's way to avoid asking for something, that is, to avoid expressing desire, is by what he calls deserving the thing. His proof of desert is his valiantness, so his spitting blood in battle is his way of deserving being fed, that is to say, being devoured, being loved unconditionally. (War and feeding have consistently been joined in the words of this play. A Plebeian says: "If the wars eat us not up they will" (I.i.85-86). And Cominius: Coriolanus "cam'st to . . . this feast having fully dined before" (I.ix.10-11); but again Cominius does not get the connection complete.) To be fed by Volumnia is to be fed *to* her. But since the right, or effective, bleeding depends (according to the equation of blood and milk) upon its being a form of feeding, of giving food, providing blood identifies him with his mother. His mother's fantasy here suggests that the appropriate reciprocity for having nourished her son is for him to become her, as if to remove the arbitrariness in her having been born a woman; and since it is a way of putting her into the world it is a way of giving birth to her. Her son's companion fantasy of reciprocity would be to return Rome's gift, to nurse Rome with the valiantness he sucked from it.

This fantasy produces contradictions which are a match for the fury of contradictions one feels in Coriolanus's position (for example, between the wishes for dependence and for independence). For he can only return his nourishment if Rome—taken

as the people—deserves it. Hence the people's lack of desert entails his lack of desert, entails that he cannot do the thing that acquires love; he is logically debarred from reciprocating. The fact that he both has absolute contempt for the people and yet has an absolute need for them is part of what maddens him. (This implies again that I cannot understand Coriolanus's emotions toward the people as directed simply to, say, their cowardice, their being poor fighters. I am taking it that he needs their desert for, so to speak, private reasons as much as public.) The other part of what maddens him is that neither the people nor his mother—neither of the things that mean Rome—will understand his position. Neither understands that his understanding of his valiantness, his virtue, his worth, his deservingness, is of himself as a provider, and that this is the condition of his receiving his own sustenance. (This assumes that he shares his mother's fantasy of the equation of milk and blood—as if there is nothing in her he has not taken in.) The people, precisely on the contrary, maddeningly accuse him of *withholding* food; and his mother precisely regards his heroism purely as toughness, devoid of tenderness; or pure fatherhood devoid of motherhood; and as deserving something more than acknowledging what he provides, more than the delicate balance of his self-account, as if being made consul were indeed something more. ("Know, good mother, / I had rather be their servant in my way / Than sway with them in theirs" [II.i.107–109]). In these misunderstandings they have both already abandoned him, weaned him, before the ritual of being made consul comes to grief and he is formally banished. This prior rejection, not just once but always, inherently, would allow the understanding of his anger as his mother interprets anger, that is as lamentation ("Anger's my meat . . . lament as I do, / In anger, Juno-like"). We may not contradict her interpretation, though we may interpret it further. We might go on to interpret it as depression.

I might characterize my intention in spelling out what I call these fantasies as an attempt to get at the origin of words, not the origin of their meaning exactly but of their production, of the value they have when and as they occur. I have characterized something like this ambition of criticism variously over the years, and related it to what I understand as the characteristic procedure of ordinary language philosophy. (One such effort enters into the opening pages of "The Avoidance of Love: A Reading of *King Lear*." ) And do my spellings out help? Do they, for example, help comprehend Coriolanus's subsequent course—how he justifies his plan to burn Rome and how he is talked out of his plan by his mother? It is not hard to encourage oneself in the impression that one understands these things. To me they seem mysteries. I will sketch the answers I have to these questions and then conclude by indicating how these answers serve to interpret our relation to this play, which means to me, to understand what a Shakespearean play is (as revealed in this instance).

I pause, in turning to these questions, to make explicit an issue that at any time may nag our consciousness of the play. The mother-relation is so overwhelmingly present in this play that we may not avoid wondering, at least wondering whether we are to wonder, what happened to the father. The play seems to me to raise this

question in three ways, which I list in decreasing order of obviousness. First, Menenius is given a certain kind of fatherly role, or a role as a certain kind of father, but the very difficulty of conceiving of him as Coriolanus's real father, which is to say, as Volumnia's husband and lover, keeps alive our imagination of what such a figure might look like. Second, Coriolanus's erotic attachment to battle and to men who battle suggests a search for the father as much as an escape from the mother. This would afford an explanation for an otherwise, to me, insufficiently explained use in the play of the incident from Plutarch's *Life* in which Coriolanus asks, exhausted from victorious battle, that a man in the conquered city of Corioli be spared slavery on the ground that Coriolanus had "sometime lay at the poor man's house," a man whose name Coriolanus discovers he has forgotten. The vagueness of the man's identity and Coriolanus's expression of confusion in Shakespeare—distinct differences from the occurrence of the incidents in Plutarch—suggest to my mind that the unnamed figure to whom Coriolanus wishes to provide reparation is, vaguely, transiently, an image of his father.<sup>6</sup>

Third, and so little obvious as to be attributable to my powers of hallucination, Coriolanus's efforts at mythological identification as he sits enthroned and entranced before Rome is an effort—if one accepts one stratum of description I will presently give of him—to come unto the Father. (I will not go into the possibilities here, or fantasies, that a patrician matron is simultaneously father-mother, or that, in replacing his father he becomes his own father.)

I was about to ask how we are to grasp Coriolanus's return and his change of heart. My answer depends on plotting a relation between him and the other sacrificial lamb I have mentioned, the lamb of God, Christ. I say plotting a relation between the figures, not at all wishing to identify them. I see Coriolanus not so much as imitating Christ as competing with him. These are necessarily shadowy matters and while everything depends on accuracy in defining this relation all I can do here is note some elements that will have to figure in the plotting.

Earlier I spoke of Coriolanus's solution to the paradox of hungering not to hunger, of wanting not to want, of asking not to ask, as one of becoming a god. Now we may see that Christ is the right god because of the way he understands his mission as providing non-literal food, food for the spirit, for immortality; and because it is in him that blood must be understood as food. If one is drawn to this as a possibility, one may find surprising confirmation for it in certain of Coriolanus's actions and in certain descriptions of his actions. (I am not interested in claiming that Coriolanus is *in some sense* a scapegoat, the way perhaps any tragic hero is; but in claiming that he is a specific inflection of *this* scapegoat.)

First his actions, two especially. First is his pivotal refusal to show his wounds. I associate this generally with the issue of Christ's showing his wounds to his disciples, in order to show them the Lord—that is, to prove the resurrection—and specifically with his saying to Thomas, who was not present at the first showing and who made seeing the wounds a condition of believing, that is, of declaring his faith, "Thomas,

because thou hast seen me, thou believst: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed" (John 20:29). (Thomas would not believe until he can, as he puts it and as Jesus will invite him to, "put mine hand into his side"; Aufidius declares the wish to "wash my fierce hand in's heart" (I.x.27). I make no further claims on the basis of this conjunction; I can see that some good readers may feel that it is accidental. I do claim that good reading may be guided, or inspired, by the over-excitement such conjunctions can cause.) The second action is the second intercession, in which Vololumnia, holding her son's son by the hand, together with Virgilia and Valeria appear to Coriolanus before Rome. I take this to invoke the appearance, while Christ is on the cross, of three women whose names begin with the same letter of the alphabet (I mean begin with M's, not with V's), accompanied by a male he loves, whom he views as his mother's son (John 19:25-27). (Giving his mother a son presages a mystic marriage.)

I do not suppose that one will be convinced by these relations unless one has antecedently felt some quality of—what shall I say?—the mythic in these moments. This is something I meant in calling these relations "shadowy matters": I meant this not negatively but positively. It is a way to understand Vololumnia's advice to Coriolanus that when he makes his appeal to the people he act out the meaning of his presence:

. . . for in such business  
Action is eloquence, and the eyes of th'ignorant  
More learned than the ears. . . .

(III.ii.75-77)

I accept this as advice Shakespeare is giving to his own audience, a hint about why the words of this particular play may strike one as uncharacteristically ineloquent.

The second source of confirmation for Coriolanus's connection with the figure of Christ lies, I said, in certain descriptions of his actions. I specify now only some parallels that come out of Revelation. In that book the central figure is a lamb (and there is also a dragon), and a figure who sits on a special horse and on a golden throne, whose name is known only to himself, whose "eyes were as a flame of fire," and who burns a city which is identified as a woman; it is, in particular, the city (Babylon) which in Christian tradition is identified with Rome. And I associate the opening of Coriolanus's opening diatribe against the citizens, in which he rebukes their wish for "good words" from him—glad tidings—accusing them of liking "neither peace nor war," with the message Christ dictates to the writer of Revelation: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; . . . Therefore, because thou art luke warm, and neither cold nor hot, it will come to pass that I shall spew thee out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:15-16). (An associated text from Plutarch would be: "So Martius, being a stowte man of nature, that never yelded in any respect, as one thinking that to overcome allwayes, and to have the upper hande in all matters, was a Token of magnanimities, & of no base and fainte corage, which spitteth out anger from the

most weake and passioned parte of the harte, much like the matter of an impostume: went home. . . ." Whatever the ambiguities in these words, the general idea remains, indelibly, of Coriolanus's speech, when angry, as being the spitting forth of the matter of an abscess.<sup>7</sup> This play about food is about revoltedness and disgust. *Coriolanus* and *Revelation* are about figures who are bitter, disgusted, by those whom they have done good, whose lives they have sustained.)

Conviction, or lack of it, in these relations is something one has naturally to assess for oneself. Granted that they are somehow at work, they work to make comprehensible what Coriolanus's identification with the god is (they are identified as banished providers of spiritual food) and what his justification for destruction is (the people lack faith and are to suffer judgment) and why he changes his mind about the destruction. It is, I think, generally felt that his mother prevails with him by producing human, family feeling in him, in effect showing him that he is not inhuman. This again cannot be wrong, but first of all he has his access of family feeling the moment he sees the four figures approaching (a feeling that does not serve to carry the day), and second, his feeling, so conceived, does not seem to me to account for Coriolanus's words of agony to his mother as he relents and "Holds her by the hand, silent."

O mother, mother!  
What have you done? Behold, the heavens do ope,  
The gods look down, and this unnatural scene  
They laugh at. O my mother, mother! O!  
You have won a happy victory to Rome;  
But, for your son—believe it, O, believe it!—  
Most dangerously you have with him prevailed,  
If not most mortal to him. But let it come.

(Viii.182–89)

What it means that she may be "most mortal" to him cannot be that he may be killed—the mere fact of death is hardly what concerns this man. He must mean somehow that she has brought it about that he will have the wrong death, the wrong mortality, a fruitless death. Has she done this by showing him that he has feelings? But Christ, even by those who believe that he is the Lord, is generally held to have feelings. Coriolanus's speech expresses his agonized sense that his mother does not know who he is, together with an agonized plea for her belief. She has deprived him of heaven, of, in his fantasy, sitting beside his father, and deprived him by withholding her faith in him, for if she does not believe that he is a god then probably he is not a god, and certainly nothing like the Christian scenario can be fulfilled, in which a mother's belief is essential. If it were his father who sacrificed him for the city of man then he could be a god. But if it is his mother who sacrifices him he is not a god. The logic of his situation, as well as the psychology, is that he cannot sacrifice himself. He can provide spiritual food but he cannot make himself into food, he cannot say, for example, that his body is bread. His sacrifice will not be redemptive, hence one may



say his tragedy is that he cannot achieve tragedy. He dies in a place irrelevant to his sacrifice, carved by many swords, by hands that can derive no special nourishment from him. It is too soon in the history of the Roman world for the sacrifice to which he aspires and from which he recoils.

And perhaps it is too late, as if the play is between worlds. I know I have been struck by an apparent incorporation in *Coriolanus* of elements from Euripides' *Bacchae*, without knowing how or whether a historical connection is thinkable. Particularly, it seems to me, I have been influenced in my descriptions by feeling under Coriolanus's final plea to his mother the plea of Pentheus to his mother, outside the city, to see that he is her son and not to tear him to pieces. The *Bacchae* is about admitting the new god to the city, present in one who is returning to his native city, a god who in company with Demeter's grain brings nourishment to mankind, one who demands recognition in order to vindicate at once his mother's honor and his being fathered by Zeus; the first in the city to acknowledge his divine descent are two old men. My idea is that Coriolanus incorporates both raging, implacable Dionysus and raging, inconstant Pentheus and that Volumnia partakes both of the chaste yet god-seduced Semele and of the mad and murderous Agave. Volumnia's identifying of herself with Juno (specifically, with Juno's anger) may thus suggest her sensing herself as the cause of her curse. It is not essential to my thought here that Shakespeare knew (of) Euripides' play. It is enough to consider that he knew Ovid's account of Pentheus's story and to suppose that he took it as Euripides had, as about the kind of son (one unable to express desire) to whom the failure of his mother's recognition presents itself as a sense of being torn to pieces.

What is the good of such a tragedy of failed tragedy? Which is to ask: What is this play to us? How is it to do its work? This is the question I have been driving at and now that it is before us I can only state flatly, without much detail, my provisional conclusions on the topic.

They can by now be derived from certain considerations about Menenius's telling of the Fable of the Belly in the opening scene of the play. Every reader or participant has to make something of this extended, most prominently placed event. Until recent times most critics have assumed that Menenius is voicing a commonplace assumption of the times in which Shakespeare wrote and one that represents Shakespeare's view of the state—the state as a hierarchical organism, understandable on analogy with the healthy, functioning body. It is my impression that recent critics have tended not to dwell on the fable, as though the conservative way is the only way to take it and as though that vision is no longer acceptable, or presentable. But this seems to me to ignore what I take to be the three principal facts about Menenius's telling of the tale, the facts, one may say, of the drama in the telling. (1) The fable has competing interpretations. What the first citizen calls its "application" is a *question*. He and Menenius joke about whether the people or the patricians are better represented by the belly. (2) The fable is about food, about its distribution and circulation. (3) The fable is told (by a patrician) to citizens who are in the act of rising in revolt against a

government they say is deliberately starving them, hence the patrician can be said to be giving them words *instead* of food. The first mystery of the play is that this seems to work, that the words stop the citizens, that they stop to listen, as though these citizens are themselves willing, under certain circumstances, to take words for food, to equate them.

Coriolanus's entrance at the end of the argument over the application of the fable confirms this equation of words and food: he has from the early lines of the play been identified as the people's chief enemy, here in particular as chief of those who withhold food; and his opening main speech to them, after expressing his disgust by them, is to affirm that he does withhold and will go on withholding "good words" from them. Accordingly every word he speaks will mean the withholding of good words. He will, as it were, have a sword in his mouth. There are other suggestions of the equation of words and food in the play (for example, the enlivening of the familiar idea that understanding is a matter of digesting) but this is enough for me, in view of my previous suggestions, to take the equation as part of the invocation of the major figure of our civilization for whom words are food. The word made flesh is to be eaten, since this is the living bread. Moreover the parables of Jesus are characteristically about food, and are always meant as food. The words/food equation suggests that we should look again at Volumnia's intercession speeches, less for their content than for the plain fact of their drama, that they are much the longest speeches Coriolanus listens to, that they cause his mother to show him her undivided attention and him to give her his silence; he is as if filled up by her words. It pleases me further to remember that Revelation also contains a vision of words that are eaten: there is a book the writer swallows that tastes sweet as honey in the mouth but bitter in the belly (10:10), as if beauty were the beginning of terror, as in, for example, a play of Shakespeare's.

My conclusion about the working of the play, about what kind of play it is, adds up then as follows. I take the telling of the Fable of the Belly as a sort of play-within-the-play, a demonstration of what Shakespeare takes his play—named for Coriolanus—to be, for *Coriolanus* too is a tale about food, with competing interpretations requiring application, told by one man to a cluster, call this an audience, causing them to halt momentarily, to turn aside from their more practical or pressing concerns in order to listen. Here is the relevance I see in the fact that the play is written in a time of corn shortages and insurrections. The fact participates not just in the imagery of the play's setting, but in the question of the authority and the virtue of portraying such a time, at such a time, for one's fellow citizens; a question of the authority and the virtue in being a writer. I see in Shakespeare's portrayal of the Fable of the Belly a competition (in idea, perhaps in fact) with Sir Philip Sidney's familiar citing of the fable in his *Defence of Poetry*, or a rebuke of it.<sup>8</sup> Sidney records Menenius's application of the tale as having "wrought such effect in the people, as I never read that only words brought forth but then, so sudden and so good an alteration; for upon reasonable conditions a perfect reconciliation ensued." But in casting his partisan, limited Men-

enius as the teller of the tale, and placing its telling at the opening of the play, where we have minimal information or experience for judging its events, Shakespeare puts into question both the nature of the "alteration" and the "perfection" of the reconciliation. Since these are the two chief elements of Sidney's defense of poetry, this defense is as such put into question; but hence, since Shakespeare is nevertheless giving his own version of the telling of the fable, making his own story about the circulation of food, he can be understood as presenting in this play his own defense of poetry (more particularly, of plays, which Sidney particularly attacks). It is in this light noteworthy that Sidney finds "Heroical" poetry to be most "[daunting to] all back-biters," who would "speak evil" of writing which presents "champions . . . who doth not only teach and move to a truth, but teacheth and moveth to the most high and excellent truth." But since "the image of such worthies" as presented in such works "most inflameth the mind with desire to be worthy," and since *Coriolanus* is a play that studies the evil in such an inflammation, Shakespeare's play precisely questions the ground of Sidney's claim that "the Heroical . . . is not only a kind, but the best and most accomplished kind of Poetry."

What would this play's defense of poetry be, I mean how does it direct us to consider the question? Its incorporation of the Fable of the Belly I understand to identify us, the audience, as starvers, and to identify the words of the play as food, for our incorporation. Then we have to ask of ourselves, as we have to ask of the citizens: Why have we stopped to listen? That is, what does it mean to be a member of this audience? Do we feel that these words have the power of redemption for us?

They are part of an enactment of a play of sacrifice; as it happens, of a failed sacrifice. And a feast-sacrifice, whether in Christian, pre-Christian, Nietzschean, or Freudian terms, is a matter of the founding and the preserving of a community. A community is thus identified as those who partake of the same body, of a common victim. This strikes *Coriolanus* as our being caught in a circle of mutual partaking, incorporating one another. And this is symbolized, or instanced, by speaking the same language. A pervasive reason *Coriolanus* spits out words is exactly that they *are* words, that they exist only in a language, and that a language is metaphysically something shared, so that speaking is taking and giving in your mouth the very matter others are giving and taking in theirs.

It is maddeningly irrelevant to *Coriolanus* which party the belly represents. What matters to him is that, whoever rules, all are members, that all participate in the same circulation, the same system of exchange, call it Rome; that to provide civil nourishment you must allow yourself to be partaken of. This is not a play about politics, if this means about political authority or conflict, say about questions of legitimate succession or divided loyalties. It is about the formation of the political, the founding of the city, about what it is that makes a rational animal fit for conversation, for civility. This play seems to think of this creation of the political, call it the public, as the overcoming of narcissism, incestuousness, and cannibalism; as if it perceives an identity among these relations.

In constructing and contesting with a hero for whom the circulation of language is an expression of cannibalism, *Coriolanus* takes cannibalism as symbolic of the most human of activities, the most distinctive, or distinguished, of human activities (Sidney cites the familiar conjunction: “. . . Oratio, next to Ratio, . . . [is] the greatest gift bestowed upon mortality.”) Hence I conceive *Coriolanus* to be incorporating Montaigne’s interpretation of literal cannibalism as more civilized than our more sophisticated—above all, more pervasive—manners of psychological torture, our consuming others alive.<sup>9</sup> Montaigne’s “On Cannibals” is more specifically pertinent to this play: its story of a cannibal prisoner of a cannibal society valorously taunting his captors by reminding them that in previous battles, when he had been victorious over them, he had captured and eaten their ancestors, so that in eating him they will be consuming their own flesh—this is virtually the mode in which *Coriolanus* addresses himself to the Volscians in putting himself at their mercy. And more variously pertinent: the essay interprets cannibalism as revenge; and it claims (in one of those moods of measured hilarity) that when three men from a cannibal society visited Rouen and were asked what they found most amazing about the ways of Montaigne’s countrymen, one of their responses was as follows (I will not comment on it but quote in Frame’s translation):

Second (they have a way in their language of speaking of men as halves of one another), they had noticed that there were among us men full and gorged with all sorts of good things, and that their other halves were beggars at their doors, emaciated with hunger and poverty; and they thought it strange that these needy halves could endure such an injustice, and did not take the others by the throat, or set fire to their houses.

Within the experience of such a vision of the circulation of language, a question not readily formulatable, may press for expression: To what extent can *Coriolanus* (and the play that creates him and contests with him) be understood as seeing his salvation in silence? The theme of silence haunts the play. For example, one of *Coriolanus*’s perfectly cursed tasks is to ask for “voices” (votes) that he exactly wishes not to hear. Again, the words “silent” and “silence” are beautifully and mysteriously associated, once each, with the women in his life: with his wife (“My gracious silence, hail!”); and with his mother (“(He holds her by the hand, silent)”). Toward both, the word of silence is the expression of intimacy and identification; but in his wife’s case it means acknowledgment, freedom from words, but in a life beyond the social, while in his mother’s case it means avoidance, denial, death, that there is no life beyond the social. The ambiguities here are drilled through the action of the play by the repeated calls “Peace, peace”—hysterical, ineffective shouts of this particular word for silence. The play literalizes this conventional call for silence by implying that speech is war, as if this is the reason that both words and war can serve as food. But the man for war cannot find peace in peace—not merely because he, personally, cannot keep a civil tongue in his head, but because a tongue is inherently uncivil (if not, one hopes,

inveterately so). Silence is not the absence of language; there is no such absence for human beings; in this respect, there is no world elsewhere.

Coriolanus cannot imagine, or cannot accept, that there is a way to partake of one another, incorporate one another, that is necessary to the formation rather than to the extinction of a community. (As he cannot imagine being fed without being deserving. This is his precise reversal of Christ's vision, that we cannot in ourselves deserve sustenance, and that it is for that reason, and in that spirit, that we have to ask for it. Thus is misanthropy, like philanthropy, a certain parody of Christianity.) The play *Coriolanus* asks us to try to imagine it, imagine a beneficial, mutual consumption, arguing in effect that this is what the formation of an audience is. (As if *vorare* were next to *orare*.)

It seems to me that what I have been saying demonstrates, no doubt somewhat comically, the hypothesis of the origin of tragedy in religious ritual—somewhat comically, because I must seem rather to have deflated the problem, implying that whether the hypothesis is true depends on what is meant by “tragedy,” what by “origin,” and which ritual is in mind.<sup>10</sup> I have, in effect, argued that if you accept the words as food, and you accept the central figure as invoking the central figure of the Eucharist, then you may accept a formulation to the effect (not that the play is the ritual of the Eucharist, but to the effect) that the play celebrates, or aspires to, the same fact as the ritual does, say the condition of community. (Eucharist means gratitude, precisely what Coriolanus feels the people withhold from him. This is another way to see why I am not satisfied to say that Coriolanus is enraged first of all by the people's cowardice. Perhaps one may say that to Coriolanus their cowardice means ingratitude.) As for the idea of origin, we need only appeal to Descartes's idea that the origin of a thing is the same thing that preserves it. What preserves a tragedy, what creates the effect of a certain kind of drama, is the appropriation by an audience of this effect, our mutual incorporation of its words. When the sharing of a sacrifice is held on religious ground, the ritual itself assures its effectiveness. When it is shifted to aesthetic ground, in a theater, there is no such preexisting assurance; the work of art has to handle everything itself. You might think of this as the rebirth of religion from the spirit of tragedy. A performance is nothing without our participation in an audience; and this participation is up to each of us.

To enforce the necessity of this decision to participate (a decision which of course has its analogue for the individual reader with the script in his or her hands) is the way I understand the starkness of the words of this play, their relative ineloquence, their lack of apparent resonance. The play presents us with our need for one another's words by presenting withholding words, words that do not meet us half way. It presents us with a famine of words. This way of seeing it takes it to fulfill a prophecy from the Book of Amos (8:12): “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water; but of hearing the words of the Lord.”

## Notes

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- \* Delivered as part of a colloquium on *Coriolanus* held at The Humanities Institute during its meetings at Stanford University, Sept. 10–12, 1982.
1. *The Claim of Reason* (New York and Oxford, 1979). The *Othello* material occupies the concluding pages of the book (481–96), and appears, differently situated, under the title “Epistemology and Tragedy” in *Daedalus*, Summer 1979. The subject was broached in “The Avoidance of Love: A reading of *King Lear*” in *Must We Mean What We Say?*, reprinted Cambridge, England, 1976.
  2. See Bertolt Brecht, *Collected Plays Volume 9*, edited by Ralph Manheim and John Willett (New York, 1973), pp. 378–94.
  3. In *Representing Shakespeare*, edited by Murray Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn (Baltimore, 1980).
  4. “There seems to be some question whether one’s knowing oneself is something active, something one does . . . or rather something one suffers, something that happens to one,” *The Claim of Reason*, p. 352.
  5. A point emphasized by the chairman of the *Coriolanus* panel at the Stanford meetings, Professor Harry Berger, in his remarks introducing my paper.
  6. This is not meant as an alternative to but as an extension of the fine perception in the last note to Act I, scene ix by the editor of the Arden edition (Philip Brockbank) that “One name is found in the scene and another is lost.” My thought is that both are names held by Caius Martius Coriolanus. I suppose I am influenced in this thought by a further change Shakespeare makes in Plutarch’s characterization of the man. In Plutarch Coriolanus speaks of the man as “an old friend and host of mine”; it is at the analogous moment in Shakespeare that Coriolanus speaks of the man as one at whose house he lay. The opening words of Plutarch’s *Life* are “The house of the Martians,” where “house” of course means “family,” a phrase and passage employed by Shakespeare at the end of Act II where the Tribunes invoke Coriolanus’s biological descent as if to their sufficient credit for having considered it, but to Coriolanus’s insufficient credit for election to Consul.
  7. I quote from North’s translation of Plutarch’s biography of Coriolanus, which is given in an appendix to the Arden edition of *Coriolanus* (London, 1976). The “impostume” passage occurs on p. 133.

Coriolanus’s sense of disgust with the people is more explicitly conveyed by Shakespeare through the sense of their foul smell than of their foul taste. Shakespeare does use the idea of spitting twice: once, as cited, to describe Hector’s forehead bleeding in battle, and the second time in Coriolanus’s only scene of soliloquy, disguised before Aufidius’s house: “Then know me not / Lest that thy wives with spits and boys with stones / In puny battle slay me”—so that both times spitting is linked with battle and with food. As I have implied, I understand Coriolanus’s vision of his death in Antium at the hands of wives and boys as a prophecy of the death he actually undergoes there, spitted by the swords of strange boys.
  8. The following remarks on Sidney’s tract were reintroduced, expanded from an earlier set on the subject that I had dropped from the paper, as a result of an exchange with Stephen Greenblatt during the discussion period following my presentation at Stanford.
  9. Finding the words/food representation so compelling, I am ignoring here the path along which the circulation of words also registers the circulation of money (as in “So shall my

lungs/Coin words" [III.i.77–78]; and in "The price is, to ask it kindly" [II.iii.77]). The sense of consuming as expending would relate to Coriolanus's frantic efforts to deny that his actions can be recompensed ("better to starve than crave the hire"—for example, of receiving voices *in return*). Money depends upon the equating of values; Coriolanus on their lack of equation, on measurelessness, pricelessness.

10. In the discussion period at Stanford, Paul Alpers noted that I seemed to find something like a comic perspective of the play to be more extensive than just here where I am making it explicit, and he asked how far I wished to go in seeking this perspective. I find this a true response to my reading, but it goes beyond anything I can explore now. I mentioned then what I take to be a starting point to such an exploration, Coriolanus's sense that as he and his mother stand silent together "The Gods look down, and this unnatural scene / They laugh at." Does he feel the gods laugh because mother and son are too close or too distant with one another? At least the scene is unnatural because it is social, and because the social is the scene of mazes of meaning as dense as poetry, in which its poor, prosaic, half-human creatures are isolated. The comedic perspective I seek presents itself to me as a totalization, or a kind of transcendentalizing, of dramatic irony—where the omen or allusion is not of some specific, future event, but of the totality of the present, of events as they are, without our being able to specify in advance what individuates or what relates these events.

## Prospero's Wife

THIS ESSAY is not a reading of *The Tempest*. It is a consideration of five related moments and issues. I have called it "Prospero's Wife" because some of it centers on her, but in a larger sense because she is a figure conspicuous by her absence from the play, and my large subject is the absent, the unspoken, that seems to me the most powerful and problematic presence in *The Tempest*. In its outlines, the play seems a story of privatives: withdrawal, usurpation, banishment, the loss of one's way, shipwreck. As an antithesis, a principle of control, preservation, re-creation, the play offers only magic, embodied in a single figure, the extraordinary powers of Prospero.

Prospero's wife is alluded to only once in the play, in Prospero's reply to Miranda's question, "Sir, are you not my father?"

Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and  
She said thou wast my daughter; and thy father  
Was Duke of Milan; and his only heir  
And princess: no worse issued.

(I.ii.55–59)<sup>1</sup>

Prospero's wife is identified as Miranda's mother, in a context implying that though she was virtuous, women as a class are not, and that were it not for her word, Miranda's legitimacy would be in doubt. The legitimacy of Prospero's heir, that is, derives from her mother's word. But that word is all that is required of her in the play. Once he is assured of it, Prospero turns his attention to himself and his succession, and he characterizes Miranda in a clause that grows increasingly ambivalent—"his only heir / And princess: no worse issued."

Except for this moment, Prospero's wife is absent from his memory. She is wholly absent from her daughter's memory: Miranda can recall several women who attended her in childhood, but no mother. The implied attitudes toward wives and mothers here are confirmed shortly afterward when Prospero, recounting his brother Antonio's crimes, demands that Miranda "tell me / If this might be a brother," and Miranda takes the question to be a charge of adultery against Prospero's mother:

I should sin  
To think but nobly of my grandmother:  
Good wombs have borne bad sons.

(I.ii.118–20)



She immediately translates Prospero's attack on his brother into an attack on his mother (the best she can produce in her grandmother's defence is a "not proved"), and whether or not she has correctly divined her father's intentions, Prospero makes no objection.

The absent presence of the wife and mother in the play constitutes a space that is filled by Prospero's creation of surrogates and a ghostly family: the witch Sycorax and her monster child, Caliban (himself, as becomes apparent, a surrogate for the other wicked child, the usurping younger brother), the good child/wife Miranda, the obedient Ariel, the violently libidinated adolescent Ferdinand. The space is filled, too, by a whole structure of wifely allusion and reference: widow Dido, model at once of heroic fidelity to a murdered husband and the destructive potential of erotic passion; the witch Medea, murderess and filicide; three exemplary goddesses, the bereft Ceres, nurturing Juno and licentious Venus; and Alonso's daughter, Claribel, unwillingly married off to the ruler of the modern Carthage, and thereby lost to her father forever.

Described in this way, the play has an obvious psychoanalytic shape. I have learned a great deal from Freudian treatments of it, most recently from essays by David Sundelson, Coppélia Kahn and Joel Fineman in the volume called *Representing Shakespeare*.<sup>2</sup> It is almost irresistible to look at the play as a case history. *Whose* case history is a rather more problematic question, and one that criticism has not, on the whole, dealt with satisfactorily. It is not, obviously, that of the characters. I want to pause first over what it means to consider the play as a case history.

In older psychoanalytic paradigms (say Ernest Jones's) the critic is the analyst, Shakespeare is the patient, the plays his fantasies. The trouble with this paradigm is that it misrepresents the analytic situation in a fundamental way. The interpretation of analytic material is done in conjunction with, and in large measure by, the patient, not the analyst; what the analyst does is *enable* the patient, free the patient to interpret. An analysis done without the patient, like Freud's of Leonardo, will be revealing only about the analyst. A more recent paradigm, in which the audience's response is the principal analytic material, also seems to me based on fundamental misconceptions, first because it treats an audience as an entity, a unit, and in addition a constant one, and more problematically, because it conceives of the play as an objective event, so that the critical question becomes, "this is what happened: how do we respond to it?"

To take the psychoanalytic paradigm seriously, however, and treat the plays as case histories, is surely to treat them *not* as objective events but as collaborative fantasies, and to acknowledge thereby that we, as analysts, are implicated in the fantasy. It is not only the patient who creates the shape of his history, and when Bruno Bettelheim observes that Freud's case histories "read as well as the best novels,"<sup>3</sup> he is probably telling more of the truth than he intends. Moreover, the

crucial recent advances in our understanding of Freud and psychoanalysis have been precisely critical acts of close and inventive reading—there are, in this respect, no limits to the collaboration. But if we accept this as our paradigm, and think of ourselves as Freud's or Shakespeare's collaborators, we must also acknowledge that our reading of the case will be revealing, again, chiefly about ourselves. This is why every generation, and perhaps every reading, produces a different analysis of its Shakespearean texts. In the same way, recent psychoanalytic theory has replaced Freud's central Oedipal myth with a drama in which the loss of the seducing mother is the crucial infant trauma. We used to want assurance that we would successfully compete with or replace or supersede our fathers; now we want to know that our lost mothers will return. Both of these no doubt involve real perceptions, but they also undeniably serve particular cultural needs.

Shakespeare plays, like case histories, derive from the observation of human behavior, and both plays and case histories are imaginative constructs. Whether either is taken to be an objective report of behavior or not has more to do with the reader than the reporter, but it has to be said that Shakespearean critics have more often than not treated the plays as objective accounts. Without such an assumption, a book with the title *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines* would be incomprehensible. We feel very far from this famous and popular Victorian work now, but we still worry about consistency and motivation in Shakespearean texts, and much of the commentary in an edition like the Arden Shakespeare is designed to explain why the characters say what they say—that is, to reconcile what they say with what, on the basis of their previous behavior, we feel they ought to be saying. The critic who worries about this kind of consistency in a Shakespeare text is thinking of it as an objective report.

But all readings of Shakespeare, from the earliest seventeenth-century adaptations, through eighteenth-century attempts to produce "authentic" or "accurate" texts, to the liberal fantasy of the old Variorum Shakespeare, have been aware of deep ambiguities and ambivalences in the texts. The eighteenth century described these as Shakespeare's errors, and generally revised them through plausible emendation or outright rewriting. The argument was that Shakespeare wrote in haste, and would have written more perfect plays had he taken time to revise; the corollary to this was, of course, that what we want are the perfect plays Shakespeare did not write, rather than the imperfect ones that he did. A little later the errors became not Shakespeare's but those of the printing house, the scribe, the memory of the reporter or the defective hearing of the transcriber. But the assumption has always been that it is possible to produce a "perfect" text: that beyond or behind the ambiguous, puzzling, inconsistent text is a clear and consistent one.

Plays, moreover, are not only—and one might argue, not primarily—texts.

They are performances too, originally designed to be read only in order to be acted out, and the gap between the text and its performance has always been, and remains, a radical one. There always has been an imagination intervening between the texts and their audiences, initially the imagination of producer, director, actor (roles that Shakespeare played himself), and since that time the imagination of editors and commentators as well. These are texts that have always had to be *realized*. Initially unstable, they have remained so despite all our attempts to fix them. All our attempts to produce an authentic, correct, that is, *stable* text have resulted only in an extraordinary variety of versions. Their differences can be described as minor only if one believes that the real play is a Platonic idea, never realized but only approached and approximately represented by its text.

This is our myth: the myth of a stable, accurate, authentic, *legitimate* text, a text that we can think of as Shakespeare's legitimate heir. It is, in its way, a genealogical myth, and it operates with peculiar force in our readings of *The Tempest*, a play that has been, for the last hundred and fifty years, taken as a representation of Shakespeare himself bidding farewell to his art—as Shakespeare's legacy.

### The Missing Wife

She is missing as a character, but Prospero, several times explicitly, presents himself as incorporating her, acting as both father and mother to Miranda, and in one extraordinary passage describes the voyage to the island as a birth fantasy:

When I have decked the sea with drops full salt,  
Under my burden groaned, which raised in me  
An undergoing stomach, to bear up  
Against what should ensue.

(I.ii.155–58)

To come to the island is to start life over again—both his own and Miranda's—with himself as sole parent, but also with himself as favorite child. He has been banished by his wicked, usurping, possibly illegitimate younger brother Antonio. This too has the shape of a Freudian fantasy: the younger child is the usurper in the family, and the kingdom he usurps is the mother. On the island, Prospero undoes the usurpation, recreating kingdom and family with himself in sole command.

But not quite, because the island is not his alone. Or if it is, then he has repeople it with all parts of his fantasy, the distressing as well as the gratifying. When he arrives he finds Caliban, child of the witch Sycorax, herself a victim of banishment. The island provided a new life for her too, as it did literally for her son, with whom she was pregnant when she arrived. Sycorax died some time before Prospero came to the island; Prospero never saw her, and everything he knows about her he has learned from Ariel. Nevertheless, she is insistently pres-

ent in his memory—far more present than his own wife—and she embodies to an extreme degree all the negative assumptions about women that he and Miranda have exchanged.

It is important, therefore, that Caliban derives his claim to the island from his mother: "This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother" (I.ii.333). This has interesting implications to which I shall return, but here I want to point out that he need not make the claim this way. He could derive it from the mere fact of prior possession: he was there first. This, after all, would have been the sole basis of Sycorax's claim to the island, but it is an argument that Caliban never makes. And in deriving his authority from his mother, he delivers himself into Prospero's hands. Prospero declares him a bastard, "got by the devil himself / Upon thy wicked dam" (I.ii.321–22), thereby both disallowing any claim from inheritance and justifying his loathing for Caliban.

But is it true that Caliban is Sycorax's bastard by Satan? How does Prospero know this? Not from Sycorax: Prospero never saw her. Not from Caliban: Sycorax died before she could even teach her son to speak. Everything Prospero knows about the witch he knows from Ariel—her appearance, the story of her banishment, the fact that her pregnancy saved her from execution. Did Sycorax also tell Ariel that her baby was the illegitimate son of the devil? Or is this Prospero's contribution to the story, an especially creative piece of invective, and an extreme instance of his characteristic assumptions about women? Nothing in the text will answer this question for us, and it is worth pausing to observe first that Caliban's claim seems to have been designed so that Prospero can disallow it, and second that we have no way of distinguishing the facts about Caliban and Sycorax from Prospero's invective about them.

Can Prospero imagine no good mothers, then? The play, after all, moves toward a wedding, and the most palpable example we see of the magician's powers is a betrothal masque. The masque is presided over by two exemplary mothers, Ceres and Juno, and the libidinous Venus with her destructive son Cupid has been banished from the scene. But the performance is also preceded by the most awful warnings against sexuality—male sexuality this time: all the libido is presumed to be Ferdinand's, while Miranda remains Prospero's innocent child. Ferdinand's reassuring reply, as David Sundelson persuasively argues,<sup>4</sup> includes submerged fantasies of rape and more than a hint that when the lust of the wedding night cools, so will his marital devotion:

... the murkiest den,  
The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion  
Our worser genius can, shall never melt  
Mine honor into lust, to take away  
The edge of that day's celebration. . . .

(IV.i.25–29)

This is the other side of the assumption that all women at heart are whores: all men at heart are rapists—Caliban, Ferdinand, and of course that means Prospero too.

### The Marriage Contract

The play moves toward marriage, certainly, yet the relations it postulates between men and women are ignorant at best, characteristically tense, and potentially tragic. There is a familiar Shakespearean paradigm here: relationships between men and women interest Shakespeare intensely, but not, on the whole, as husbands and wives. The wooing process tends to be what it is here: not so much a prelude to marriage and a family as a process of self-definition—an increasingly unsatisfactory process, if we look at the progression of plays from *As You Like It*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Twelfth Night* through *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida* to *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Cymbeline*. If we want to argue that marriage is the point of the comic wooing process for Shakespeare, then we surely ought to be looking at how he depicts marriages. Here Petruchio and Kate, Capulet and Lady Capulet, Claudius and Gertrude, Othello and Desdemona, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Cymbeline and his queen, Leontes and Hermione will not persuade us that comedies ending in marriages have ended happily, or if they have, it is only because they have ended there, stopped at the wedding day.

What happens after marriage? Families in Shakespeare tend to consist not of husbands and wives and their offspring, but of a parent and a child, usually in a chiasmic relationship: father and daughter, mother and son. When there are two children, they tend to be represented as alternatives or rivals: the twins of *The Comedy of Errors*, Sebastian and Viola, infinitely substitutable for each other, or the good son-bad son complex of Orlando and Oliver, Edgar and Edmund. We know that Shakespeare himself had a son and two daughters, but that family configuration never appears in the plays. Lear's three daughters are quite exceptional in Shakespeare, and even they are dichotomized into bad and good. We might also recall Titus Andronicus's four sons and a daughter and Tamora's three sons, hardly instances to demonstrate Shakespeare's convictions about the comforts of family life.

The family paradigm that emerges from Shakespeare's imagination is a distinctly unstable one. Here is what we know of Shakespeare's own family: he had three brothers and three sisters who survived beyond infancy, and his parents lived into old age. At eighteen he married a woman of twenty-four by whom he had a daughter within six months, and a twin son and daughter a year and a half later. Within six more years he had moved permanently to London, and for the next twenty years—all but the last three years of his life—he lived apart from

his wife and family. Nor should we stop here: we do not in the least know that Susanna, Hamnet and Judith were his only children. He lived in a society without contraceptives, and unless we want to believe that he was either exclusively homosexual or celibate, we must assume a high degree of probability that there were other children. The fact that they are not mentioned in his will may mean that they did not survive, but it also might mean that he made separate, non-testamentary provision for them. Certainly the plays reveal a strong interest in the subject of illegitimacy.

Until quite late in his career, the strongest familial feelings seem to be expressed not toward children or wives but toward parents and siblings. His father dies in 1601, the year of *Hamlet*, his mother in 1608, the year of *Coriolanus*. And if we are thinking about usurping, bastard younger brothers, it cannot be coincidental that the younger brother who followed him into the acting profession was named Edmund. There are no dramatic correlatives comparable to these for the death of his son Hamnet in 1596. If we take the plays to express what Shakespeare thought about himself (I put it that way to indicate that the assumption strikes me as by no means axiomatic) then we will say that he was apparently free to think of himself as a father—to his two surviving daughters—only after the death of both his parents. 1608 is the date of *Pericles* as well as *Coriolanus*.

One final biographical observation: Shakespearean heroines marry very young, in their teens. Miranda is fifteen. We are always told that Juliet's marriage at fourteen is not unusual in the period, but in fact it is unusual in all but upper class families. In Shakespeare's own family, his wife married at twenty-four and his daughters at twenty-four and thirty-one. It was Shakespeare himself who married at eighteen. The women of Shakespeare's plays, of course, are adolescent boys. Perhaps we should see as much of Shakespeare in Miranda and Ariel as in Prospero.

### Power and Authority

The psychoanalytic and biographical questions raised by *The Tempest* are irresistible, but they can supply at best partial clues to its nature. I have decried the plays as collaborative fantasies, and it is not only critics and readers who are involved in the collaboration. It is performers and audiences too, and I take these terms in their largest senses, to apply not merely to stage productions, but to the theatrical dimension of the society that contains and is mirrored by the theater as well. Cultural concerns, political and social issues, speak through *The Tempest*—sometimes explicitly, as in the open-ended discussion of political economy between Gonzalo, Antonio and Sebastian in Act II. But in a broader sense, family structures and sexual relations become political structures in the play, and these are relevant to the political structures of Jacobean England.

What is the nature of Prospero's authority and the source of his power? Why is he Duke of Milan and the legitimate ruler of the island? Power, as Prospero presents it in the play, is not inherited but self-created. It is magic, or "art," an extension of mental power and self-knowledge, and the authority legitimizing it derives from heaven—"Fortune" and "Destiny" are the terms used in the play. It is *Caliban* who derives his claim to the island from inheritance, from his mother.

In the England of 1610, both these positions represent available, and indeed normative ways of conceiving of royal authority. James I's authority derived, he said, both from his mother and from God. But deriving one's legitimacy from Mary Queen of Scots was an ambiguous claim at best, and James always felt exceedingly insecure about it. Elizabeth had had similar problems with the sources of her own authority, and they centered precisely on the question of her legitimacy. To those who believed that her father's divorce from Katherine of Aragon was invalid (that is, to Catholics), Elizabeth had no hereditary claim; and she had, moreover, been declared legally illegitimate after the execution of her mother for adultery and incest. Henry VIII maintained Elizabeth's bastardy to the end. Her claim to the throne derived exclusively from her designation in the line of succession, next after Edward and Mary, in her father's will. This ambiguous legacy was the sole source of her authority. Prospero at last acknowledging the bastard *Caliban* as his own is also expressing the double edge of kingship throughout Shakespeare's lifetime (the ambivalence will not surprise us if we consider the way kings are represented in the history plays). Historically speaking, *Caliban's* claim to the island is a good one.

Royal power, the play seems to say, is good when it is self-created, bad when it is usurped or inherited from an evil mother. But of course the least problematic case of royal descent is one that is not represented in these paradigms at all, one that derives not from the mother but in the male line from the father: the case of Ferdinand and Alonso, in which the wife and mother is totally absent. If we are thinking about the *derivation* of royal authority, then, the absence of a father from Prospero's memory is a great deal more significant than the disappearance of a wife. This has been dealt with in psychoanalytic terms, whereby Antonio becomes a stand-in for the father, the real usurper of the mother's kingdom;<sup>5</sup> but here again the realities of contemporary kingship seem more enlightening, if not inescapable. James in fact had a double claim to the English throne, and the one through his father, the Earl of Darnley, was in the strictly lineal respects somewhat stronger than that of his mother. Both Darnley and Mary were direct descendants of Henry VII, but under Henry VIII's will, which established the line of succession, descendants who were not English-born were specifically excluded. Darnley was born in England, Mary was not. In fact, Darnley's mother went from Scotland to have her baby in England precisely in order to preserve the claim to the throne.

King James rarely mentioned this side of his heritage, for perfectly understandable reasons. His father was even more disreputable than his mother; and given what was at least the public perception of both their characters, it was all too easy to speculate about whether Darnley was even in fact his father.<sup>6</sup> For James, as for Elizabeth, the derivation of authority through paternity was extremely problematic. In practical terms, James's claim to the English throne depended on Elizabeth *naming* him her heir (we recall Miranda's legitimacy depending on her mother's word), and James correctly saw this as a continuation of the protracted negotiations between Elizabeth and his mother. His legitimacy, in both senses, thus derived from two mothers, the chaste Elizabeth and the sensual Mary, whom popular imagery represented respectively as a virgin goddess ("a piece of virtue") and a lustful and diabolical witch. James's sense of his own place in the kingdom is that of Prospero, rigidly paternalistic, but incorporating the maternal as well: the King describes himself in *Basilicon Doron* as "a loving nourish father" providing the commonwealth with "their own nourish-milk."<sup>7</sup> The very etymology of the word "authority" confirms the metaphor: *augeo*, "increase, nourish, cause to grow." At moments in his public utterances, James sounds like a gloss on Prospero: "I am the husband, and the whole island is my lawful wife; I am the head, and it is my body."<sup>8</sup> Here the incorporation of the wife has become literal and explicit. James conceives himself as the head of a single-parent family. In the world of *The Tempest*, there are no two-parent families. All the dangers of promiscuity and bastardy are resolved in such a conception—unless, of course, the parent is a woman.

My point here is not that Shakespeare is representing King James as Prospero and/or Caliban, but that these figures embody the predominant modes of conceiving of royal authority in the period. They are Elizabeth's and James's modes too.

### The Renunciation of Magic

Prospero's magic power is exemplified, on the whole, as power over children: his daughter Miranda, the bad child Caliban, the obedient but impatient Ariel, the adolescent Ferdinand, the wicked younger brother Antonio, and indeed, the shipwreck victims as a whole, who are treated like a group of bad children. Many critics talk about Prospero as a Renaissance scientist, and see alchemical metaphors in the grand design of the play. No doubt there is something in this, but what the play's action presents is not experiments and empiric studies but a fantasy about controlling other people's minds. Does the magic work? We are given a good deal of evidence of it: the masque, the banquet, the harpies, the tempest itself. But the great scheme is not to produce illusions and good weather; it is to bring about reconciliation, and here we would have to say that it works only indifferently well. "They being penitent," says Prospero to Ariel, "The sole



drift of my purpose doth extend / Not a frown further" (Vi.28–30). The assertion opens with a conditional clause whose conditions are not met: Alonso is penitent, but the chief villain, the usurping younger brother Antonio, remains obdurate. Nothing, not all Prospero's magic, can redeem Antonio from his essential badness. Since Shakespeare was free to have Antonio repent if that is what he had in mind—half a line would have done for critics craving a reconciliation—we ought to take seriously the possibility that that is not what he had in mind. Perhaps, too, penitence is not what Prospero's magic is designed to elicit from his brother.

Why is Prospero's power conceived as magic? Why, in returning to Milan, does he renounce it? Most commentators say that he gives up his magic when he no longer needs it. This is an obvious answer, but it strikes me as too easy, a comfortable assumption cognate with the view that the play concludes with reconciliation, repentance, and restored harmony. To say that Prospero no longer *needs* his magic is to beg all the most important questions. What does it mean to say that he needs it? Did he ever need it, and if so, why? And does he in fact give it up?

Did he ever need magic? Prospero's devotion to his secret studies is what caused all the trouble in the first place—this is not an interpretation of mine, it is how Prospero presents the matter. If he has now learned to be a good ruler through the exercise of his art, that is also what taught him to be a bad one. So the question of his *need* for magic goes to the heart of how we interpret and judge his character: is the magic a strength or a weakness? To say that he no longer needs it is to say that his character changes in some way for the better, that by renouncing his special powers he becomes fully human. This is an important claim: let us test it by looking at Prospero's renunciation.

What does it mean for Prospero to give up his power? Letting Miranda marry and leaving the island are the obvious answers, but they can hardly be right. Miranda's marriage is *brought about* by the magic; it is part of Prospero's plan. It pleases Miranda, certainly, but it is designed by Prospero as a way of satisfying himself. Claribel's marriage to the King of Tunis looks less sinister in this light: daughters' marriages, in royal families at least, are designed primarily to please their fathers. And leaving the island, reassuming the dukedom, is part of the plan too. Both of these are presented as acts of renunciation, but they are in fact what the exercise of Prospero's magic is intended to effect, and they represent his triumph.

Prospero renounces his art in the great monologue at the beginning of Act V, "Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves," and for all its valedictory quality, it is the most powerful assertion of his magic the play gives us. It is also a powerful literary allusion, a close translation of a speech of Medea's in Ovid,<sup>9</sup> and it makes at least one claim for Prospero that is made nowhere else in the

play: that he can raise the dead. For Shakespeare to present this as a *renunciation* speech is upping Prospero's ante, to say the least.

In giving up his magic, Prospero speaks as Medea. He has incorporated Ovid's witch, prototype of the wicked mother Sycorax, in the most literal way—verbatim, so to speak—and his “most potent art” is now revealed as translation and impersonation. In this context, the distinction between black and white magic, Sycorax and Prospero, has disappeared. Two hundred lines later, Caliban too is revealed as an aspect of Prospero: “This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine.”

But Caliban is an aspect of Antonio, the evil child, the usurping brother. Where is the *real* villain in relation to Prospero now? Initially Antonio had been characterized, like Caliban and Sycorax, as embodying everything that is antithetical to Prospero. But in recounting his history to Miranda, Prospero also presents himself as deeply implicated in the usurpation, with Antonio even seeming at times to be acting as Prospero's agent: “The government I cast upon my brother”; “[I] to him put the manage of my state”; “my trust . . . did beget of him / A falsehood,” and so forth. If Prospero is accepting the blame for what happened, there is a degree to which he is also taking the credit. Antonio's is another of the play's identities that Prospero has incorporated into his own, and in that case, what is there to forgive?

Let us look, then, at Prospero forgiving his brother in Act V. The pardon is enunciated (“You, brother mine, that entertain ambition. . . . I do forgive thee” [75–78])<sup>10</sup> and qualified at once (“unnatural though thou art”), reconsidered as more crimes are remembered, some to be held in reserve (“at this time I will tell no tales” [128–29]), all but withdrawn (“most wicked sir, whom to call brother / Would even infect my mouth” [130–31]), and only then confirmed through forcing Antonio to relinquish the dukedom, an act that is presented as something he does unwillingly. The point is not only that Antonio does not repent here: he also is not *allowed* to repent. Even his renunciation of the crown is Prospero's act: “I do . . . require / My dukedom of thee, which perforce, I know, / Thou must restore” (131–34). In Prospero's drama, there is no room for Antonio to act of his own free will.

The crime that Prospero holds in reserve for later use against his brother is the attempted assassination of Alonso. Here is what happened. Prospero sends Ariel to put all the shipwreck victims to sleep except Antonio and Sebastian. Antonio then persuades Sebastian to murder Alonso—his brother—and thereby become King of Naples. Sebastian agrees, on the condition that Antonio kill Gonzalo. At the moment of the murders, Ariel reappears and wakes Gonzalo:

My master through his art foresees the danger  
That you his friend are in; and sends me forth—  
For else his project dies—to keep them living.

(II.i.293–95)

This situation has been created by Prospero, and the conspiracy is certainly part of his project—that is why Sebastian and Antonio are not put to sleep. If Antonio is not forced by Prospero to propose the murder, he is certainly acting as Prospero expects him to do, and as Ariel says, Prospero “through his art foresees” that he will. What is clearly taking place is Prospero restaging his usurpation and maintaining his control over it this time. Gonzalo is waked rather than Alonso so that the old courtier can replay his role in aborting the assassination.

So at the play's end, Prospero still has usurpation and attempted murder to hold against his brother, things that still disqualify Antonio from his place in the family. Obviously there is more to Prospero's plans than reconciliation and harmony—even, I would think, in the forthcoming happy marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda. If we look at that marriage as a political act (the participants are, after all, the children of monarchs) we will observe that in order to prevent the succession of his brother, Prospero is marrying his daughter to the son of his enemy. This has the effect of excluding Antonio from any future claim on the ducal throne, but it also effectively disposes of the realm as a political entity: if Miranda is the heir to the dukedom, Milan through the marriage becomes part of the kingdom of Naples, not the other way around. Prospero recoups his throne from his brother only to deliver it over, upon his death, to the King of Naples once again. The usurping Antonio stands condemned, but the effects of the usurpation, the link with Alonso and the reduction of Milan to a Neapolitan fiefdom are, through Miranda's wedding, confirmed and legitimized. Prospero has not regained his lost dukedom, he has usurped his brother's. In this context, Prospero's puzzling assertion that “every third thought shall be my grave” can be seen as a final assertion of authority and control: he has now arranged matters so that his death will remove Antonio's last link with the ducal power. His grave is the ultimate triumph over his brother. If we look at the marriage in this way, giving away Miranda is a means of preserving his authority, not of relinquishing it.

### A Bibliographical Coda

The significant absence of crucial wives from the play is curiously emphasized by a famous textual crux. In Act IV Ferdinand, overwhelmed by the beauty of the masque Prospero is presenting, interrupts the performance to say,

Let me live here, ever.  
So rare a wondered father and a wise  
Makes this place Paradise.

(IV.i.122–24)

Critics since the eighteenth century have expressed a nagging worry about the fact that in celebrating his betrothal, Ferdinand's paradise includes Prospero but

not Miranda. In fact, what Ferdinand said, as Jeanne Addison Roberts demonstrated only six years ago,<sup>11</sup> reads in the earliest copies of the folio, “So rare a wondered father and a *wife*,” but the crossbar of the *f* broke early in the print run, turning it to a long *s* and thereby eliminating Miranda from Ferdinand’s thoughts of wonder. The odd thing about this is that Rowe and Malone in their eighteenth-century editions emended “wise” to “wife” on logical grounds, the Cambridge Shakespeare of 1863 lists “wife” as a variant reading of the folio, and Furnivall’s 1895 photographic facsimile was made from a copy that reads “wife,” and the reading is preserved in Furnivall’s parallel text. Nevertheless, after 1895 the wife became invisible: bibliographers lost the variant, and textual critics consistently denied its existence until six years ago. Even Charlton Hinman with his collating machines claimed there were no variants whatever in this entire forme of the folio. And yet when Jeanne Roberts examined the Folger Library’s copies of the book, including those that Hinman had collated, she found that two of them have the reading “wife,” and two others clearly show the crossbar of the *f* in the process of breaking. We find only what we are looking for or are willing to see. Obviously it is a reading whose time has come.

## Notes

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1. Line references throughout are to the Arden edition, edited by Frank Kermode. In this instance, I have restored the folio punctuation of line 59.
2. Edited by Murray M. Schwartz and Coppelia Kahn (Baltimore, 1980).
3. *The New Yorker*, March 1, 1982, p. 53.
4. “So Rare a Wonder’d Father: Prospero’s *Tempest*,” in *Representing Shakespeare*, p. 48.
5. Coppelia Kahn makes this point, following a suggestion of Harry Berger, Jr., in “The Providential *Tempest* and the Shakespearean Family,” in *Representing Shakespeare*, p. 238. For an alternative view, see the exceptionally interesting discussion by Joel Fine-man, “Fratricide and Cuckoldry: Shakespeare’s Doubles,” in *Representing Shakespeare*, p. 104.
6. The charge that he was David Rizzio’s child was current in England in the 1580s, spread by rebellious Scottish Presbyterian ministers. James expressed fears that it would injure his chance of succeeding to the English throne, and he never felt entirely free of it.
7. C. H. McIlwain, *Political Works of James I* (Cambridge, Mass., 1918), p. 24.
8. From the 1603 speech to Parliament; *ibid.*, p. 272.
9. *Metamorphoses* 7.197–209, apparently at least partly refracted through Golding’s English version.
10. Kermode and most editors read “entertained,” but I have restored the folio reading, which seems to me unexceptionable.
11. “‘Wife’ or ‘Wise’—*The Tempest* 1. 1786,” *University of Virginia Studies in Bibliography* 31(1978).

## Authors-Readers: Jonson's Community of the Same

### Introduction

IN THE COURSE of her incisive and powerful study of the rise of professionalism, Magali Sarfatti Larson identifies as one of the chief cognitive supports of the professional ethos something she calls the "ideology of merit" (p. 213).<sup>1</sup> By this she means what is to us the very familiar notion (not to say conviction) that in modern corporate and academic life one rises by virtue of native ability and demonstrated competence rather than by the accidents of birth and fortune. Larson labels this notion "ideological" first because it is elaborated in the service of certain well-defined interests (largely those of the corporate bourgeoisie), and second because it masks what actually happens when the professional sets out to climb the ladder of advancement. What the professional tells himself (because he has been told it by others) is that as an individual, he is "essentially the proprietor of his own person and capacities, for which he owes nothing to society" (p. 222); but in fact, as Larson points out, he owes everything to society, including the self whose independence supposedly enables and underwrites his achievements. That is to say, it is only with reference to the articulation and hierarchies of a professional bureaucracy that a sense of the self and its worth—its merit—emerges and becomes measurable. The ladder of advancement is not only a structural fact; it is a fact that tells the person who occupies a place on it who he is and what he has accomplished. By providing goals and aspirations and alternative courses of action, the ladder also provides the very "means of self-assertion" (p. 199). "Career," Larson declares, "is a pattern of organization of the self" (p. 229); or to put it another (less aphoristic) way, the self of the professional is constituted and legitimized by the very structures—social and institutional—from which it is supposedly aloof.

In Larson's analysis, professionalism and its contradictions constitute a departure from an earlier aristocratic model in which preferment is a function of a "traditional social hierarchy" (p. 90), and rewards are distributed on the basis of "social privileges" that pre-exist "the entry into practice." She has in mind, of

course, the system or network of patronage that has recently become the object of so much scholarly attention; and while she is surely right to contrast that network—where access and mobility are largely determined by class—to the vertical passage offered by the mechanisms of education and training, the two worlds of modern bureaucracy and ancient privilege are alike in at least one respect: they present their inhabitants with the problem of maintaining a sense of individual worth within the confines of a totalizing structure. In the Renaissance as well as in the twentieth century, that problem is known by the word “merit.” As Robert Harding has recently observed, theorists of patronage were as concerned as their modern counterparts that preferment be based, insofar as it was possible, on considerations of merit and virtue. To be sure, considerations of birth were themselves part of the “merit calculus”—“it is to be presumed,” says one treatise, “that the son of a good father will bear himself heir of his virtues”—and merit, as Harding points out, “was conceived more in terms of innate talents rather than talents acquired by training and education,” but still in all, it is clear from the evidence that the distinction between “true desert” and merely political and social preferment was as much in force (albeit in a somewhat different form) as it is today.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that it was in force has an obvious psychological consequence: everyone wants to believe that his rewards have been earned rather than bestowed, and conversely, everyone wants to believe that his ill fortune is a comment not on his abilities, but on the perversity of a corrupt and blinkered system. In a modern bureaucracy it is harder to believe the second, since the system advertises itself as one that responds only to competence and genuine achievement rather than to the accidents of birth, or national or geographic origin. In the world of Renaissance patronage it is harder to believe the first, since every recognition or reward comes tagged with the name of someone who could have very well withheld it and to whom one is obligated in ways that cannot be ignored.

This is especially true of the court poet whose productions almost always bear on their face the signs of subservience—dedications, occasional celebrations, flatteries, petitions, expressions of gratitude, recordings of debt. How can someone whose work seems indistinguishable from the network of patronage maintain a belief in its independence and therefore in the independence of his own worth and virtue? I propose in this essay to ask that question by taking up the case of Ben Jonson, a poet whose every title would seem to mark him as a man dependent not only for his sustenance but for his very identity on the favor and notice of his social superiors. In what follows I will proceed somewhat indirectly, moving from a revisionary account of Jonson’s poetic strategies to an analysis of the relationship between those strategies and his effort to assert his freedom and dignity in the face of everything that would seem to preclude them.

Although Ben Jonson's poetry has been characterized as urbane and polished, much of it is marked by a deliberate and labored awkwardness. This is especially true of the beginning of a Jonson poem where one often finds a meditation on the difficulty of beginning, a meditation that will typically take the form of a succession of false starts after which the poem stumbles upon its subject, having in the meantime consumed up to a third of its length in a search for its own direction. Thus, for example, the poem in praise of Shakespeare spends its first sixteen lines exploring the kinds of praise it will *not* offer before Jonson declares at line 17, "I therefore will begin," and even then what follows is a list of the poets to whom Shakespeare will *not* be compared.<sup>3</sup> In the "Epistle to Katherine, Lady Aubigny" (*The Forest*, no. 13) Jonson goes on for twenty lines about the dangers one courts by praising before he draws himself up to announce "I, madame, am become your praiser" (21). The opening of the "Epistle to Master John Selden" (*Underwood*, no. 14) is more abrupt: "I know to whom I write," but although he knows, it is another twenty-nine lines before he hazards a direct address and says to Selden, "Stand forth my object." In the Cary-Morison ode (*Underwood*, no. 70) the halt and start of the verse is imitated by a character—the "brave infant of Saguntum"—who draws back from entering the world and therefore never manages to enter the poem, although he seems at first to be its addressee. And in what is perhaps the most complicated instance of the pattern, "An Elegy on the Lady Jane Paulet" (*Underwood*, no. 83), Jonson melodramatically portrays himself as unable to recognize the ghost of the Lady, who then identifies herself and immediately vanishes from the poem, leaving the poet with the task of writing an inscription for her tomb, a task he attempts in several aborted ways before resolving to leave off heraldry and "give her soul a name" (22), a resolution that is immediately repudiated by a declaration of poetic inability—"I durst not aim at that" (25)—so that as we reach line 30 of the poem we are being told that its subject cannot possibly be described.

What I would like to suggest in this essay is that Jonson's habit of beginning awkwardly is not simply a mannerism but is intimately related to the project of his poetry, and indeed represents a questioning of that project, since the issue always seems to be whether or not the poem can do what it sets out to do. The issue is also whether or not the reader can do what he is asked to, for quite often the interrupted or delayed beginning of a poem is part of a double strategy of invitation and exclusion in which the reader is first invited to enter the poem, and then met, even as he lifts his foot above the threshold, with a rehearsal of the qualifications for entry, qualifications which reverse the usual relationship between the poet and a judging audience. Here the salient example is "An Epistle Answering To One That Asked to Be Sealed of the Tribe of Ben" (*Underwood*,

no. 47), where the reader must stand with his foot poised for seventy-eight lines. But a more manageable though equally instructive example is a small, hitherto unremarked-upon poem in the *Ungathered Verse*.<sup>4</sup>

In Authorem

Thou, that wouldst finde the habit of true passion,  
And see a minde attir'd in perfect straines;  
Not wearing moodes, as gallants doe a fashion,  
In these pide times, only to shewe their braines,

Looke here on *Bretons* worke, the master print:  
Where, such perfections to the life doe rise.  
If they seeme wry, to such as looke asquint,  
The fault's not in the object, but their eyes.

For, as one comming with a laterall view,  
Unto a cunning piece wrought perspective,  
Wants facultie to make a censure true:  
So with this Authors Readers will it thrive:

Which being eyed directly, I divine,  
His prooffe their praise, will meete, as in this line.  
Ben: Johnson.

The tension that finally structures this poem at every level surfaces in the very first line in the word "habit" which means both "characteristic form" and "outward apparel." The tension lies in the claims implicitly made by the two meanings. The claim of one is to be presenting the thing itself while the claim of the other is limited to the presentation of a surface, and since that surface is a covering there is a suggestion (borne out by the examples of use listed in the *OED*) that what covers also hides and conceals. The uneasy relationship between the two meanings is brought out by the phrase "true passion." Can we truly see true passion if what we see is its habit? The question is not answered but posed again in line 2. Can a mind perfectly seen also be "attir'd?" Is the perfection we are asked to admire the perfection of the mind or of the dress that adorns it and therefore stands between it and our line of vision? The ambiguity of "habit" reappears in "straines" which, in addition to being an obvious reference to Breton's verse, carries the secondary meaning of pedigree or lineage. Is the perfect strain a perfect verbal rendering, i.e., a representation, or it is a perfect progeny, the direct offspring of the truth and therefore a piece of the truth itself?

As one proceeds through the first stanza, these questions are not insistent, in part because the poem's syntax has not yet stabilized. This syntactical hesitation is, as we shall see, typical of Jonson's poetry and allows him to keep alive options



that will later converge in a single but complex sense. Thus, for example, it is unclear whether lines 3 and 4 are in apposition to "minde," and therefore descriptive of what the reader can expect to find, or in apposition to "Thou" (l.1) and therefore descriptive of the reader, who is required to do the finding. What is clear is that the description is negative, characterizing something or someone that does not show itself in modes or colors or even wit ("braines"). It is therefore with a particular sense of challenge that the second stanza issues its imperative "Look here!" Look where, one might ask, or at what, since we know that it cannot be at variegated surfaces or eye-catching fashions. The only instruction we receive is to look at "such perfections," but these perfections, whatever they are, have not been given any palpable or visible form; and almost as if to forestall a complaint that we have been assigned an insufficiently explicit task, Jonson delivers a pronouncement on those who find themselves unable to perform it: "If they seeme wry, to such as look asquint, / The fault's not in the object, but their eyes."

It is at this point that the relationship between the object (so carefully unspecified) and the reader's eyes becomes the poem's focus and its real subject. In the third stanza the requirements for right vision are forthrightly presented in a simile that is as complicating as it is illuminating. Perspective is a device by which one produces in art the same visual effects that are produced without artifice in nature. It is the manipulation of surface in order to produce the illusion of depth; it is the practice of deception in order to disclose the real; and it therefore, as Ernest Gilman has observed, "bestows a double role" on the artist "as truth-teller and liar, and on the viewer as either ideal perceiver or dupe."<sup>5</sup> The paradox of perspective—its "cunning" is designed to neutralize the deficiencies of its own medium—is the paradox already hinted at in the doubleness of "habit," "straines," and "shewe." Is what is shown a revelation or is it an interposition—a "*mere shewe*"—that puts true revelation at even a further remove? Does Breton's work give its reader a sight of "true passion" or does it stand between that sight and his deceived eye? Are the "perfections" that seemingly "rise to the life" (always the tainted claim of illusionistic art) the perfections of appearance only? Such questions are not answered but given a particularly pointed form by the simile's argument, which contrasts the distortion that attends a "laterall" or sideways view with the view of a spectator who is correctly positioned. But that position has itself been forced upon him by the laws of perspective and by the manipulative strategy of the artist who deploys them. From within those laws and that strategy, the observer's judgment may indeed be "true" (11), but is it true to what really is, or true only to the constructed reality imposed on him by artifice?

In imitation of Jonson, I have deliberately withheld the context (or perspective) in which these questions receive an answer, the context of the court masque, a perspectival form at whose center is the figure of the monarch, at once audience and subject. In the theater presided over by Jonson and Inigo Jones, the king's

chair occupies the only point in the hall from which the perspective is true. He is therefore not only the chief observer; he is what is being observed both by the masquers who direct their actions at him, and by the other spectators who must strive to see the presentation from his position if they are to "make a censure true." Moreover, since the masque is itself a celebration of the king's virtue, what he watches is himself, and insofar as his courtiers, in their efforts to align their visions with his, reproduce the relationship courtiers always have to a monarch, they are also at once the observers of an action and the performers of what they observe. One can no longer say then that the spectators are taken in or deceived by a contrived illusion, for they are themselves the cause of what they see, and in order to make a "censure true" they need only recognize themselves. There is no distance between them and a spectacle or representation of which they are the informing idea. The relationship between viewer and presentation is not one of subjection and control, but of identity; they are, in essence, the same, and because they are the same the court saw in the masque "not an imitation of itself, but its true self."<sup>6</sup>

It is here in the notion of an observer who is both indistinguishable from what he sees and its cause that the ethical and epistemological dilemmas of representation are resolved or at least bypassed, and it is that notion which informs the concluding lines of stanza 3: "So with this Authors Readers will it thrive." Of course this line bears a perfectly reasonable sense as the conclusion to the simile's argument: the readers of Breton's work will judge it correctly to the extent that their line of vision is direct rather than oblique. But in the context of the masque experience, to which the entire simile has reference, a truly direct vision is the consequence of having recognized oneself and therefore of having become the reader of one's own actions—having become, in short, an author-reader. The composite noun which appears exactly in the center of Jonson's line is an answer (plainly there for all who have the eyes to see) to all the questions the poem implicitly raises. Insofar as the problem of the poem has been to find a position from which a reader of Breton's work can correctly judge it ("make a censure true"), that problem is solved by the assumption of an author-reader; that is, of a reader whose mind is attired with the same perfections as the mind informing the book. Judgment for such a reader will not even be an issue, since the act of judging implies a distance or a gap that has already been bridged by the identity, the sameness, of the censoring mind and its object. In this felicitous epistemology, perception is not mediated or "asquint" because it is *self*-perception; there is no obstruction between the eye and its object because there is literally nothing (no thing) between them. The dilemma of representation—its inability to be transparent, to refrain from clothing or covering—is no longer felt because representation is bypassed in favor of the instantaneous recognition, in another and in the work of another, of what one already is.

To solve the poem's problem in this way, however, is only to make the poem itself a problem, along with Breton's work. What exactly is their status? If what the fit reader would see in Breton's work is already in his mind, while others simply "want facultie," what is there left for the work to do? What *could* it do? And insofar as these questions apply to Breton, so do they apply equally to Jonson, who is as much "this author" as anyone else, and is certainly *this* author in relation to *this* poem. Isn't its work as superfluous as the work it purports to praise? Isn't its reader, its author-reader, directed to look at something he already is? All of these questions are rendered urgent by the first word of the concluding couplet, "Which," a word that is itself a question: "Which"? To what does it refer? The only possible candidate in the third stanza is the "cunning piece wrought perspective" of line 10, but it can hardly be that which is to be "eyed directly," since the noun-phrase is part of a simile, of an indirect or lateral approach, and is therefore by definition at a remove from direct perception. No matter how far back one goes in the poem, a satisfactory referent for "which" will not be found; *which* is just the point. The pronoun that stands in for nothing present or available refers to the perfection the poem cannot name because any name or habit serves only to obscure it. "Which" is a sign within the poem of what it cannot do, and a sign also of what is required of its reader as well as of the reader of Breton's work, to eye directly, that is, without any intervening medium, to find in himself what no poem or habit can represent. A reader who can so "eye" will not take from the poem, but give to it the center that will always escape its representational grasp, and the true act of communication which then follows is described (but not captured) in the sonnet's amazing final line: "His prooffe, their praise, will meete, as in this line."

"His prooffe, their praise" completes the work of "Authors Readers" by bonding the two agents together in a reciprocal and mutually defining relationship. His proof, in the sense of "that which makes good" his effort, is their praise; i.e., by praising him they give evidence of his work's merit. But that praise is also *their* proof, that is, by providing his proof, they prove themselves capable of recognizing his merit and thereby attest to its residence within themselves: "His prooffe, *their* praise." But of course this immediately turns around to become once again the matter of his praise. By fashioning a book that calls for a praise that reflects on the praisers, Breton "proves out" in the sense of producing good results, and therefore earns still another round of praise; their proof, *his* praise. This self-replenishing circuit of proof and praise, praise and proof is reflected in still another meaning of proof, "a coin or medal usually struck as the test of a die, one of a limited number" (*OED*). It is in this sense that Breton's work is a "master print," a die that strikes off coins in its own image, something that at once tests and is tested (attested) by the absolute sameness of its progeny; it is an object that confers value and has its value conferred on it by the activities of those it

makes. Of course this is equally true of Jonson's poem, which is the progeny of Breton's work, a piece of praise that is both Jonson's and Breton's proof, and a die that potentially extends the circuit to those of its readers who can receive its stamp and so become pieces of producing (proving) currency in their turn.

All of these meanings are concentrated in the problematic assertion that the meeting of proof and praise occurs *in this line*. The problem is that on one level, the level on which the poem finally never performs, nothing meets in this line. To be sure, the words "praise" and "prooffe" meet, but they are not filled in or elaborated in any way that would validate the claim of the line to contain the essences for which they stand. But on another level, the level on which the poem acts out an antirepresentational epistemology, the absence at the center of the line is what makes the assertion good, provides its proof; for the line in which "praise" and "prooffe" meet is not the physical (external) line of print and paper but (1) the line of vision established by the instantaneous self-recognition of eyes similarly clear, eyes that communicate directly and without mediation, and (2) the genealogical line that is continually being extended whenever another author-reader is moved to write or praise (they are one and the same) and so give proof of his membership in the community of the clear-sighted. The members of that community eye directly because they have been "eyed" directly, that is, given eyes, by the inner vision that makes them one. They see the same perfection not because some external form compels them to recognize it, but because it *informs* their perception so that it is impossible for them to see anything else. They see themselves; they see the same. In that sense they have "eyes divine" and they can even announce themselves, as Jonson does, with the indirection characteristic of this poem, as "I divine."

It is a remarkable little poem, but it is also I think, altogether typical and points us to a recharacterization of Jonson's poetry in which some of the more familiar terms of description will be called into question. First of all it will hardly do to label Jonson a poet of the plain style if his poems continually proclaim their inability to describe or "catch" their objects. That inability is not only proclaimed; it is discoursed upon at length in the very poems that announce it. The poet dares not aim at the soul of Lady Jane Paulet because "it is too near of kin to heaven . . . to be described" (29–30). The mind of Lady Venetia Digby cannot be captured by the usual metaphors "The sun, a sea, or soundless pit" (*Underwood*, no. 84. iv, 12). These, Jonson explains "are like a mind, not it" (13). "No," he continues, "to express a mind to sense / Would ask a heaven's intelligence; / Since nothing can report that flame / But what's of kin to whence it came" (13–16). In some poems Jonson seems to claim just that status for his art, as when he declares in the "Epistle to Katherine, Lady Aubigny," "My mirror is more subtle, clear, refined, / And takes and gives the beauties of the mind" (43–44). But as it turns out what he means is that his poem is a mirror in the sense of being blank, empty

of positive assertions, filled with lists of what Lady Aubigny is not, of the companions she does not have, of the masks she does not wear, of the paths she does not take, of the spectacles and shows from which she turns. The poem does not so much occupy, but clears its ground, so that when Jonson says of it that it is a glass in which Lady Aubigny can look and see herself (29), his claim is true because there is nothing in it or on it—no account, no description, no representation—to prevent it from functioning as a reflecting surface. She will see nothing in it but her own “form” which she shall find “still the same” (23).

Jonson's poems of praise (and this means most of his poems) are all like that; they present the objects of praise to themselves; they say in effect, “Sir or Madame So and So, meet Sir or Madam So and So, whom, of course, you already know.” Once this is said, the poem is to all intents and purposes over, although the result paradoxically is that it often has a great deal of difficulty getting started since it is, in effect, all dressed up with nowhere to go. Epigram 102 says as much in its first two lines: “I do but name thee Pembroke, and I find / It is an epigram on all mankind.” Epigram 43, “To Robert, Earl of Salisbury,” is even more explicit: “What need hast thou of me, or of my muse / Whose actions to themselves do celebrate.” In Epigram 76, the process is reversed; the poet spends some sixteen lines imagining a proper object of his praise only to dismiss in line 17 what he has written as something merely “feigned” before declaring in line 18, “My Muse bad Bedford write, and that was she.”<sup>7</sup> Of course if he had hearkened to his muse in the beginning and had written the name Bedford, there would have been no need to write the poem, a crisis that is avoided by making that realization the poem's conclusion. Given an epistemology that renders it at once superfluous and presumptuous (it is “like a mind, not it”), a Jonson poem always has the problem of finding something to say, a problem that is solved characteristically when it becomes itself the subject of the poem, which is then enabled at once to have a mode of being (to get written) and to remain empty of representation.

Representation is the line of work that Jonson's poems are almost never in, except when their intention is to discredit; and indeed it is a discreditable fact about any object that it is available for representation, for that availability measures the degree to which it is not “kin to heaven” and therefore can be described. The clearest statement of this esthetic of negative availability is Epigram 115, “On The Townes Honest Man,”<sup>8</sup> who is not named, because as Jonson explains, “But, this is one / Suffers no name but a description” (3–4); that is, he is the exact opposite of those (like Pembroke and Lady Bedford) who can be named, but not described, because description can only “catch” surfaces and coverings, and is itself a covering. The point, of course, is that the town's honest man is all surface; he has no stable moral identity and therefore there is nothing *in* him to which a name could be consistently attached. He is a creature of momentary desires, whims, interests, and movements, and therefore his non-essence is per-

fectly captured by the ever-changing surface and moment to moment adjustments of verse. The very incapacity of Jonson's poetry even to approach the objects of its praise makes it the perfect medium for the objects of its opprobrium. The chameleon-like actions of the town's honest man (usually thought to be Inigo Jones) are chronicled with a particularity and directness one never encounters in the poems addressed to Jonson's patrons and heroes. When he says at the end of the poem "Described, its thus," he has earned the claim, and when he asks "Defined would you it have" and answers, "The Townes Honest Man's her errant'st knave" (34–35), the pun on "errant'st," at once greatest and most erring, tells us why a definition of the usual kind will not be forthcoming. By definition a definition fixes an essence, but if an entity is always in motion, is always erring, it has no center to be identified and it cannot be defined; it cannot receive a name.<sup>9</sup>

What we have then in Jonson's esthetic are two kinds of poetry: one that can take advantage of the full resources of language in all its representational power, although what it represents is evil; and another which must defeat and cancel out the power of representation, because the state it would celebrate is one of epistemological immediacy and ontological self-sufficiency. What one wants is not something "like," but "it," and therefore what one doesn't want is a poem. Depending on how it is read, the sixth stanza of *Underwood*, no. 84. iv ("The Mind") is descriptive of both kinds of poetry:

I call you muse, now make it true:  
Henceforth may every line be you;  
That all may say that see the frame,  
This is no picture, but the same. (21–24)

If this stanza were to appear in Epigram 115, its every line would be "you" in quite a literal sense, since the "you" in question would have not one identity, but the succession of "identities" that fill every line. Every line can also be a reference to the art of painting (the dismissal of which is the subject of *Underwood* no. 84. iv), and in that sense too every stroke of the artist's brush in Epigram 115 fully captures whatever momentary form the town's honest man has taken. Anyone who looks at this picture—that is, at this portrait of movement and instability—will see the same, that is, will see perfectly represented the endless self-fashioning that makes up the life of the "errant'st knave." The same stanza reads quite differently, however, when we relate it to the "mind" of Lady Digby, the drawing of which Jonson claims to be able to "perform alone" (3), without the aid of the painter. That boast does not survive the third stanza and the realization (which I have already quoted) that "nothing can report that flame / But what's of kin to

whence it came" (15–16). Of course that would be no report at all, since to report is to convey something to another, whereas in this transaction (if that is the word) what is of kin simply recognizes itself, recognizes, that is, the same. At this point the poem is running the familiar Jonsonian danger of asserting itself out of business, and, in what amounts to a rescue mission, the poet moves to save it by turning it over to its subject / object: "Sweet mind, then speak yourself" (17). This injunction or invitation or plea can be read in several ways: "Sweet mind, speak in place of me," a reading that preserves the poem's claim to communicate, although with a borrowed voice, or (2) "Sweet mind, speak yourself," in the tautological sense of declaring yourself as opposed to the mediating sense of speaking *about* yourself, which shades into (3) "Sweet mind, speak without mediation, without aid, without voice, without poem, but simply by being."

It is these latter two readings that finally rule as the mind that is bid to "say" remains just out of reach of the verse and of the reader's apprehension. Indeed, the poem anticipates its own repeated failure when it asks to know "by what brave way / Our sense you do with knowledge fill / And yet remain our wonder still" (18–20). How can something that is the cause of all knowledge be itself unknown, remain presentationally silent, be our wonder *still* (always, unmoving, quiet)? The question is not answered but given a succession of experiential lives, as every attempt to make the mind speak, to give it a habit as it were, collapses under the weight of its own inadequacy. Richard Peterson describes these lines as "an evocatively tactile and mobile representation of Lady Digby's mind,"<sup>10</sup> but if anything is represented it is the failure and impiety of representation; and if the verse is mobile, it is because whenever it seeks to rest, it finds that its object has once again escaped. (Again compare "On The Townes Honest Man" where the escaping or dissolving of a nonobject is what the poem accurately and repeatedly mimes.)

Our possession of that object is at its firmest (although most abstract) at line 55 when it is described as "polisht, perfect, round, and even," but even that hermetic and closed form is presented as a thing of the past that "slid moulded off from heaven" (56). The sliding continues in the next stanza as the mind is embodied in a succession of forms that are always in the act of disintegrating, a cloud, oil (but as it pours forth), showers, drops of balm, in every case a substance that is passing into a state more rarified than the one in which it is being "presented." In line 63 the verse toys with us by promising a moment in which the mind "stays," but it stays to become a "nest of odorous spice"; that is, it doesn't stay at all. Neither does it rest, despite the teasing appearance of that word at the beginning of line 65, where it is immediately glossed by the phrase "like spirits," and, moreover, "like spirits left behind." Even this fleeting image is itself left behind as it is expanded to include the alternatives of "bank or field of flowers," flowers which are said to be begotten by a "wind" (67) that enters the

poem as an image of the ever-receding mind: "In action, winged as the wind" (64). In the impossible but typically Jonsonian logic of the poem the mind as wind begets itself.

The mind finally comes to rest inside the person of Lady Digby, where it was before this self-extending and self-defeating search for representation began. "In thee . . . let it rest" (68) is the poem's final admission of defeat; "it" will remain enclosed; it will not come out; it will not be brought out; it will not be represented. Instead it will remain in communion with itself, with what it possesses and informs. When Jonson says, "yet know with what thou art possesst" (70), the circuit of knowledge has been narrowed to the space between Lady Digby and her mind, which is no space at all; there is literally no room for anything else because she entertains only ("but") such a mind. The exclusivity of this fellowship is not broached but made more apparent when it welcomes another member, "God thy Guest" ("But such a mind, mak'st God thy guest"), who is at once guest and host, possessor and possessed. The circle of this trinity closes out everything, and especially the poem of which one can now truly say, "This is no picture, but the same." If every line is Lady Digby it is only because every line has emptied itself out in the impossible effort to capture her, leaving her and her guest and those of kin to whence they came in a state of perfect self-recognition, with nothing and no one (including the would-be observer-reader) between them.

One could say then that the poem displays what George Herbert would call a "double motion." It enacts the defeat of representation by never quite being able to present its object, and it more or less "chases" that object to the portals of its proper home, where, as in the last scene of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, one catches the barest glimpse of a kind of community that is open only to those who are already members of it. That community can no more be described or "caught" than can the minds of those who populate it. Just as the mind of Lady Digby or of her unnamed counterpart in the poem "To the World" can only be characterized in terms of the actions it shuns and the obligations it does not recognize, so can the society in which such minds "really" live be characterized only in terms of what *cannot* hold it together or constitute its order, the structures of power, wealth, preferment, influence, everything in short that Jonson refers to as "Nets," "Toys," "baits," "trifles, traps and snares," "gyves," "chains," "engins," "Gins" ("To the World, A Farewell," 8, 12, 18, 24, 30, 34, and 36). These, he says in "An Epistle to Master Arthur Squib," "are poor ties, depend on those false ends. / 'Tis virtue alone, or nothing that knits friends" (11–12). The ends in question are both the purposes or motives of those who allow themselves to be defined by society's values and the ends or rhymes (poor ties) of poems that issue from and support those same false values. In either case the true knitting is accomplished by "nothing," that is by *no thing* that is visible or measurable, but by a virtue that escapes, because it is a substance apart from, either the lines of influence in the world or



the lines of description in a poem. The true poem and the true community are alike in that neither can be equated with the outward forms (of rhymes, honors, rank) that apparently tie them together.

In effect, then, Jonson is continually asserting the unreality both of what fills his poems—titles, offices, estates—and of the society in which those surfaces are the false measures of worth. It would seem therefore that he is no more a social poet than he is (except in a very special sense) a plain-style poet, and for the same reason. The plain style, as Wesley Trimpi and others have taught us, is particularly suited to the accurate representation of what men actually do in response to the pressures of everyday life<sup>11</sup>; but Jonson's interest is in what some men and women, including himself, actually *are* in a realm of being wholly removed from the everyday, even though it happens to occupy the same temporal space. The very appropriateness of the plain style to one kind of society renders it entirely inappropriate to the society that Jonson so pointedly declines to represent even as he invites us to join it.

Of course, as we have seen, that invitation is not an invitation at all, but a test, for it functions less as a means of expanding the community than as a device for closing the door in the face of those who are not already "sealed." As such a device, the poetry performs an action precisely analogous to the granting of favor and preferment by the wealthy and the powerful to those who petition them. It names who is in and who is out and awards not knighthoods, or offices or commissions or pensions or lands, but membership in the tribe of Ben. In a way, then, it is a social poetry, but only in the sense that it sets up, by refusing to describe, a society that is in direct competition with the society whose details fill its lines; by appointing himself the gatekeeper of that society, Jonson manages (at least in his poetry) the considerable feat of asserting and demonstrating his independence of the "poor ties" that supposedly constrain and define him. In short, Jonson establishes in these poems an *alternate* world of patronage and declares it (by an act of poetic fiat) more real than the world in which he is apparently embedded. He invokes the distinctions that structure (or at least appear to structure) his material existence—distinctions of place, birth, wealth, power—but then he effaces them by drawing everyone he names into a community of virtue in which everyone is, by definition, the same as everyone else. He calls his heroes and heroines by their proper titles—Lady, Sir, Lord, Knight—but then he enrolls them in his list under the title they all indifferently share.

That is why, despite the signs of specificity that are everywhere in the poetry, everyone in it is finally interchangeable. The only true relationship between members of a Jonson community is one of identity, and no matter how many persons seem to crowd into a poem, the effect of the argument is always to reduce them to one, to the same. The first five lines of Epigram 91, "To Sir Horace Vere," is almost a parody of the technique:

Which of thy names I take, not only bears  
A Roman sound, but Roman virtue wears:  
Illustrious Vere, or Horace, fit to be  
Sung by a Horace, or a muse as free;  
Which thou art to thyself. . . . (1-5)

Here the community is formed by dividing its one member into two, and then declaring (in a declaration that would hardly have seemed necessary before the poem began) that the two are the same. When the newly reunited Horace Vere is declared fit to be sung by another Horace or even by a muse of different name but like spirit ("as free"), it would seem that the population of the community is expanding; but it immediately contracts when the "muse as free" is identified (a telling word) as "thou thyself," and the absolute closedness and self-sufficiency of the community is reconfirmed. One is hardly surprised to find that the rest of the poem is concerned with what Jonson, as now superfluous muse, will *not* do. "I leave thy acts," he says, explaining that if he were to "prosecute" in detail Vere's every accomplishment, he would seem guilty of flattery; and if he were to celebrate some and omit others he would seem guilty of envy. It is a nice rationale for furthering the project of this poem, which is to get written and yet say nothing at all. Jonson *does* announce that he will say something about Vere's "Humanitie" and "Pietie," but he says only that they are "rare" (16) and "lesse mark'd" (14), which they certainly are in this poem if by "mark'd" one means set down or described. The poem ends without having taken one step from the circle formed by the two names (really one) in its title, "To Sir Horace Vere."

In an influential essay, Thomas Greene has called our attention to the prominence in Jonson's poetry of the notion of the "gathered self" which is always to itself "the same" (Epigram 98, l.10), a self whose ends and beginnings "perfect in a circle always meet" (Epigram 138, l.8), a self which presents such a closed face to the world that it is invulnerable to invasion and remains always "untouch'd," a self which may appear to travel and undergo changes in location and situation, but in fact never moves at all. What I am suggesting is that as objects and as discourses Jonson's poems are themselves gathered and closed in exactly these ways: rather than embracing society they repel it; rather than presenting a positive ethos in a plain style, they labor to present nothing at all and to remain entirely opaque. Greene asserts that "the concept of an inner moral equilibrium . . . informs . . . Jonson's verse";<sup>12</sup> but it would be more accurate to say that the concept of an inner moral equilibrium *escapes* Jonson's verse which is always citing the concept as its cause, but never quite managing to display or define it. It remains "inner" in a stronger sense than Greene's argument suggests; it remains *locked in*, forever inaccessible to any public inspection or validation. In its determination never to reveal what moves it, Jonson's poetry repeatedly enacts the

teasing career of the brave infant of Saguntum, always only "half got out" before it hastily returns and makes of itself its own urn, so that we are left to say of it, "How summed a circle didst thou leave mankind / Of deepest lore, could we the centre find" (*Underwood*, no. 70, 9–10).

## II

I am aware that this description of Jonson's poetics will strike some as being too like Edmund Wilson's "notorious account" of Jonson as an anal-erotic, a hoarder who withholds from others the treasures he collects and remains consistently "aloof, not yielding himself to intimate fellowship."<sup>13</sup> Wilson goes on to link Jonson's deficiencies of personality to his "difficulties as an artist," and he sees those difficulties reflected in characteristic artistic failures, in the absence of development or of "any sense of movement," in the lack of variety despite the appearance of multiplicity, in a tendency to everywhere reproduce his own personality ("Jonson merely splits himself up"), in a disastrous restriction of range and sympathy that contrasts so markedly with the expansiveness of Shakespeare. What I am proposing here is a view in which observations not unlike Wilson's (although to be sure in a different vocabulary) lead to an explanation not of Jonson's "glaring defects," but of the power of his poetry, a power that depends, paradoxically, on the determined reticence of that poetry, on its unwillingness to open itself to inspection, on its often-proclaimed inability to specify or describe the values that inform it, on its tendency to issue invitations (to look, to understand, to be sealed) that have the effect not of bringing readers into the community but of keeping them out.

Obviously, the question is how does one justify a poetry so described, a poetry that is committed to not asserting, to not communicating, to not being about anything? Curiously enough, the answer lies right on the surface of the question. Poetry that so withholds itself and closes its face to anything outside its circle puts pressure on those who read it to demonstrate, in the very act of reading, that they are already in. Rather than acting as an exhortation to virtuous activity (in a manner consistent with the didacticism of many centuries) these poems provide their intended readers, who are also their addressees, with an occasion for recognizing that whatever informs these poems—and it is never, can never, be specified—informs them too. At the same time that they restrict access to the community, the poems also—and by the same act—*generate* the community; generate it not by creating its members (who are already what they are), but by providing a relay or network by means of which they can make contact with and identify one another. That is why generation in the world of Jonson's poetry occurs not by sex, but by reading, by the reading of like by like, and it is essentially a male phenomenon in which the organ of begetting is the eye.

This chaste sexuality is the subject of a remarkable series of poems that begins with Epigram 62, "To Fine Lady Would-Be." Lady Would-Be's crime is that she divorces the sexual act from true fruitfulness; rather than giving forth life, she prevents life from issuing, and remains deliberately sterile; the only writing she inspires is an epitaph for the children she did not have: "Write then on thy womb; / Of the not born, yet buried, here's the tomb" (11–12). In a certain way, then, Lady Would-Be's womb is an enclosure similar to the enclosure formed by the Jonsonian community; but there is a crucial difference between the two and that difference emerges in the two poems that follow.

Epigram 63, "To Robert, Earl of Salisbury," begins as if it were surveying the landscape in search of a certain class of persons:

Who can consider they right courses run,  
 With what thy virtue on the time hath won,  
 And not thy fortune, who can clearly see  
 The judgment of the king so shine in thee;  
 And that thou seek'st reward of thy each act  
 Not from the public voice, but private fact;  
 Who can behold all envy so declined  
 By constant suffering of thy equal mind? (1–8)

Taken by themselves these lines have a double structure. They ask a question—who is discerning enough to judge you, Salisbury, by inner rather than outer criteria?—and in the course of asking it, they perform precisely the judgment they seek and thereby identify the poet as one of those "who can." The interdependence (indeed the identity) of the virtue that at once informs Salisbury's "each act" and Jonson's act of praise is nicely captured by the phrase "And not thy fortune" which participates in two constructions. As a co-subject of the verb "won" it is part of the characterization of Salisbury: "it is your virtue not your fortune that has earned you your honors." But as the delayed object of "consider" it further specifies the quality of judgment that is required by Salisbury's presence in the world: "who is it that is able to consider thy virtue and not thy fortune?"

All this is complicated enough, but at line 9 the poem takes a turn that completely changes our understanding of what it is doing, or, to be more precise, is not doing: "And can to these be silent, Salisbury?" The poem is not, as it first seemed, an inquiry into the identity and whereabouts of persons of judgment; rather, the existence and constituency of these persons is assumed, and the poem is revealed to be asking a question about their behavior: "who is it that would be capable of recognizing your virtue, Salisbury, and yet remain silent?" But, of course, this question is no more *seriously* entertained than the question it displaces. It is a rhetorical question whose directed answer is "no one": "No one could

discern you for what you truly are, Salisbury, and not respond with praise." But if that is the answer to the poem's "real" question, the poem itself has lost its point, twice: for not only have the persons of judgment already been identified, but they have already and necessarily (they *cannot* remain silent) given the response for which the poem supposedly calls. The entire performance has been circular, moving from the title—"To Robert, Earl of Salisbury"—through nine circuitous and misleading lines back to the title, to the name "Salisbury" (9) which now sounds as an invocation and as the only assertion the poem is willing to make.

And yet, although the poem fails as communication (it imparts no information) and is superfluous as an exhortation (Salisbury has already been given his due), it succeeds and has significance as *testimony*, as evidence that Jonson is no more able to remain silent than those whose praise he praises, and will therefore escape the curse of the closing couplet:

Cursed be his muse that could lie dumb or hid  
To so true worth, though thou thyself forbid. (11–12)

It is here that the contrast with the preceding poem becomes unmistakable. Jonson's womb, unlike Lady Would-Be's, will not be the tomb of the unborn, but will give birth, spontaneously and involuntarily, to acts of recognition and witness. The poem itself is just such an act—one of the "early fruits / of Love" brought forth by the sight of "noblest Cecil" whose virtues, Jonson reports in Epigram 64 ("To the Same") have "laboured in my thought" (15)—and as such it renders the curse as unnecessary and (in a sense) pointless as the lines that precede it. Those who are silent in the face of Salisbury's example are already cursed by their inability to recognize and therefore to claim a share in his virtue; and those who have that ability have already displayed it by producing the exclamations for which the poem calls and of which it is a signal instance.

Nor is that the end of it. Just as Salisbury, simply as a fact in the world, engenders in the poet a love that bears immediate fruit in these lines of praise, so do these lines engender in readers of like mind and temper (readers who need only hear the name "Salisbury") the very same fruit. Not only is procreation in the Jonsonian community spontaneous, it is also contagious, one act of recognition giving birth to another, and then to another, and so on in a self-extending sequence that is reported in the poem: "who can clearly see / The judgment of the king so shine in thee" (3–4). The knowing observer sees in Salisbury's good fortune the acumen of the king, an acumen he must himself share in order to be able to commend it; as one of those observers Jonson produces this praise (which is his "proof" in all of the senses we have previously seen) and *his* judgment is then approved by those readers who by responding affirmatively to the poem testify to their place in the community whose members it at once names and (in the manner of a litmus test) seeks out. The line of "readership" (Salisbury is read

by the king who is read by the discerning who are read by Jonson who is read by the discerning as he reads or rereads Salisbury) is also a line of generation in which merit, rather than being "sepulchured alive" (Epigram 64) as it is in Lady Would-Be's womb, is reproduced and given new life every time it is recognized.

That recognition can only be given by those who are themselves meritorious, who are able to praise Salisbury because they are the same. It is therefore no casual gesture that Jonson performs when he entitles the second of the Salisbury epigrams "To The Same." On one level of course the title merely refers the reader to the subject of the preceding poem, but on another it is a compliment doubly paid; first to Salisbury who remains the same no matter what external changes have been brought about by fortune's reward, "the public voice," or "envy," and second to Jonson who remains able to discern what is truly praiseworthy in Salisbury. A constancy that persists independently of the accidents of fortune can only be espied by one whose vision remains unaffected by those same accidents. Thus the poet too must remain the same if he is to be able to see sameness amidst the worldly marks of difference and indeed it is the business of the poem (which could well be titled "To the Same From the Same") to declare and display just that ability.

The poem is ostensibly written to celebrate Salisbury's "accession of the Treasureship," but in the first eight lines Jonson labors to detach Salisbury's worth from the "public" fact of that or any other honor and at the same time to detach the worth of his praise from the same apparent occasion. Rather than being the evidence of Salisbury's virtue, his new office is seen almost as a threat to that virtue, insofar as one might mistake the man for the title and thereby mistake the reason for the poet's praise. That is why he must begin with the curious phrase (surely unique as a poetic beginning), "Not glad."

Not glad, like those that have new hopes or suits  
With thy new place, bring I these early fruits  
Of love, and what the golden age did hold  
A treasure, art: contained in the age of gold:  
Not glad as those that old dependents be  
To see the father's rites new laid on thee; (1-6)

Jonson must clear himself of the suspicion, even before it can have been raised, that he is prompted to write by something so ephemeral as a change in outward state, the suspicion that his vision may be affected by anything one might, in the ordinary run of things, see; by "hopes" or "suits" or "place" or "gold" or "rites"; and since he is not moved by any of these things, he is able to claim that his poem (which, typically, has managed for nearly half its length to avoid assertion) is neither flattery nor self-display: ". . . nor to show a fit / Of flattery to thy titles nor of wit" (7-8).

Not admiring “show” (surface, false glitter, theatricality), his performance cannot itself be characterized as a show, and does not itself show (in the sense of reveal) anything, but remains closed to those for whom its value—and the value of its subject—are not already self-evident.

At line 9 Jonson finally admits to being gladdened by something:

But I am glad to see that time survive  
Where merit is not sepulchred alive,  
Where good men's virtues them to honours bring,  
And not to dangers; when so wise a king  
Contends to have worth enjoy, from his regard,  
As her own conscience; still the same reward. (9–14)

Again the contrast with Epigram 62, “To Fine Lady-Would-Be,” is unmistakable. What gladdens Jonson is the fertility of a community that by repeatedly recognizing its own adds to the merit it declines to bury. The rewards that accrue to Salisbury and to others like him are less significant as instances of personal gain than as the general and shared gain of men who honor themselves by honoring others, as Jonson does by giving involuntary voice to this and the previous poem. Not only is virtue its own reward (Salisbury does not need his title and office), but it rewards those who acknowledge it by marking them as virtuous too. What makes the king's choice of Salisbury praiseworthy is that he does no more (or less) than provide an external sign of what “worth” has already earned. “His regard” is the same as hers and he reaps the immediate benefit of being known as worthy himself, as “the same.”

The force of a virtue that endlessly reproduces itself is so great that it takes over the poem which is now seen to have exceeded the intention of its putative maker:

These noblest Cecil, laboured in my thought,  
Wherein what wonder see, thy name hath wrought:  
That whilst I meant but thine to gratulate,  
I've sung the greater fortunes of our state. (15–18)

In a sense, then, the poem is taken away from Jonson, but what he gets back is greater than what he loses, not only a place in the community but the honor of being the means of extending it. That honor, and the process by which it is conferred, is even more fully described and reported in *Underwood*, no. 78, “An Epigram to My Muse the Lady Digby on Her Husband, Sir Kenelm Digby.” At that poem's conclusion Jonson imagines what will happen when Lady Digby brings his lines of praise (in which, he predicts, she will “read” her husband because she already knows him in the way that like knows like) to Sir Kenelm. He will read them and receive their praise by praising them in turn; and then will give them

to the "knowing Weston" (28)—knowing his own as he is himself known—who will himself show them to others who will show them to others in an endless and finally all-encompassing chain:

... Then, what copies shall be had,  
What transcripts begged; how cried up and how glad  
Wilt thou be, muse, when this shall them befall!  
Being sent to one, they will be read by all; (29–32)

They will be read by all because they read all, that is, they test the response of all who encounter them, a response that always takes the form of adding to the gladness they bear. That is why being sent to one they are sent to all; not only because one, if he is the right one, will involuntarily extend the gift, the gladness; but because the extension is from one to others who are his copies as he is theirs, who are so much the same that there is finally no distinction between the transcripts and the original. (This is a kind of intertextuality, but one in which each text, be it poem or person, is a copy pulled from a master plate of bodiless virtue.)

If the members of Jonson's community are (in a very strong sense) the same, it is not surprising to find a sameness in the poems addressed to them, poems which are often, except for the finally superfluous name, interchangeable. Thus Epigram 67 continues the sequence begun in Epigram 63, although the subject is not now Salisbury but Suffolk. Again the poet's first concern is to clear himself, in advance, of any suggestion that he writes for the wrong reasons. Although "Most think all praises flatteries" (2), his praise is drawn from him involuntarily by the compelling perspicuity of Suffolk's virtues. In this poem, therefore, Suffolk will be "raised" (4), that is elevated, by truth; but that truth, in the form of Jonson's lines, has in turn been "raised," in the sense of being produced or nurtured, by the very thing it celebrates. In a manner altogether typical of Jonson, line 4—"As to be raised by her is only fame"—refers simultaneously to the poem's subject and to the poem itself, which are now indistinguishable.

Having thus fixed the meaning and origin of his praise before he offers it, Jonson can then begin. But as it is so often the case in his poetry, the beginning, even though it is delayed, is a false one:

Stand, high then, Howard, high in eyes of men,  
High in thy blood, thy place. (5–6)

The practiced (and knowing) reader of Jonson will recognize these as the marks of an inferior recognition, and he will not be surprised to find them immediately set aside in favor of a recognition more telling:

... but highest then  
When, in men's wishes, so thy virtues wrought  
As all thy honours were by them first sought,



And thou designed to be the same thou art,  
Before thou wert it, in each good man's heart. (6–10)

The sense of this is double. It means, first, that the power of Howard's virtue is most in evidence when those who recognize it are moved to wish for him the public honors he has not yet received, and it also means that those who recognize it are moved to imitate what they recognize. The next two lines are even more complicated. In one syntax they are a continuation of the primary sense; "you were thus (by virtue of the wishes men have for you) marked out for your present state even before you obtained it; you were what you now are (the same) before you became it." But in another syntax, "designed" is an active verb and refers to Suffolk's design or intention to remain what he is ("to be the same thou art") no matter what external changes (for good or ill) befall him. In still a third syntax, "designed" is once again passive and refers to the fashioning or designing of Suffolk by God who foresaw that he would always be what he is, either before the king raised him or before he took his place in each good man's heart. The point is that it is unnecessary to untangle these senses, since in a world where all good men are informed by the same spirit the designs of one are necessarily the design of every other and of the informing spirit itself. That spirit is named explicitly in the final couplet which also recapitulates the genealogical line that makes up the community of virtue: "Which, by no less confirmed than thy king's choice / Proves that is God's which is the people's voice" (11–12). "Proves"—not in the sense of providing independent corroboration, but in the circular sense both reported and instanced by this poem. The king's choice confirms the people's choice which confirms Suffolk's actions which confirms the unforced truth of Jonson's praise which confirms and extends the founding gesture of God's having recognized Suffolk as his own, that is, as the same.

That recognition does not occur in time, that is, at any particular time, but has always occurred, and therefore its extension into other acts of recognition (by the king, by each good man, by the poet) is assured, and is not contingent on temporal circumstances. Events in the community of the virtuous are pseudo-events. They never mark the entrance into the world of anything new, but simply offer an occasion for the re-marking of what has always been, of the same, and the poems that report these "events" imitate their structure by exhibiting a circularity that subverts their apparently linear and discursive form. The point can be illustrated by still another poem titled "To the Same," Epigram 86. In the first line of that poem Jonson characterizes himself as someone who lacks a certain knowledge: "When I would know thee, Goodyear, my thought looks. . . ." The implication is that there are moments when the knowledge of Goodyear has escaped him and he must seek it in the world; but the search ends in the very next line where it is revealed to have been unnecessary: "Upon thy well-made

choice of books and friends. . . ." For Jonson, to look upon Goodyear's choice of friends is to look upon himself, since the preceding poem (in relation to which this is "To the Same") is a record of their friendship. That poem is or will be one of Goodyear's books, so that when he is praised in the next line for "making thy friends books, and thy books friends," (4) the circle of reference is entirely closed: Jonson is both friend and book and is therefore (in a way paradoxical but inevitable given the structure of the Jonsonian universe) the double cause of the knowledge from which he claims, in line 1, to be separated. Thus when he declares in lines 5 and 6, "Now I must give thy life and deed the voice / Attending such a study, such a choice," he sets himself a task he has already performed merely by having been the object of "such a choice" and the producer of at least one book (this book) that Goodyear studies. Insofar as Goodyear lives and can be read in the books and friends he chooses, he has been given voice by Jonson's every act and gesture. The present act of voicing this poem (which, characteristically, says nothing at all about Goodyear) cannot therefore be the *singular* act suggested by the temporal urgency that seems to inform "Now I must." Jonson can do nothing *but* give voice to Goodyear's life so long as he breathes and writes. It is this involuntary sense of "must" that is finally intended here, as once again a Jonson poem defaults on its announced project—giving knowledge of Goodyear—because that project has already been completed before the poem is written and by means (the recognition of like by like) of which the poem is an extension. If the way to know Goodyear is to know those who are known (acknowledged to be friends) by him, then the way to know Goodyear—and the only way—is to know yourself as one who is so known, as one who is the same, and that is a knowledge you can never be without (the pun is intended) because it is continuous with being and antedates every attempt to specify it. That is why the key verb in the final line is in the past tense—"It was a knowledge that *begat* that love." The knowledge that *begat* and still begets Jonson's love of Goodyear (in still another backward reference to the willful infertility of Lady Would-Be) is a knowledge of what he himself is and of what is like him because it likes him, and it is also the knowledge that *begat* this poem which is therefore produced by what it supposedly seeks. "Rare poems ask rare friends," declares Jonson in "To Lucy, Countess of Bedford, with Mr. Donne's Satires"; and by "ask" he means not "request," but "reach out to." Rare poems only give themselves, yield themselves up to rare readers, to readers who are already repositories of what is asked for. Only those few readers will "ask and read / And like" (12–13), and they will like because they are like, because they are kin to whence the poem came. What they ask for is what they already have, and what they find is what they already are which is also what they will read (i.e., understand). Such readers (authors-readers) are themselves read—revealed in their true character—by that very ability to ask and like. It is a transaction of perfect if closed reciprocity in which to give some-

thing—a poem, a praise, a liking, a reading—is at the same moment to be getting it back.

### III

This reciprocity, at once endlessly self-replenishing and defiantly excluding, is the essence not only of the transaction between Jonson's poetry and the community of its readers, but of the friendship that binds that community together and provides its true—that is, nonspecifiable—ties. Not surprisingly, although friendship is the constant subject of this poetry, it is a subject that is more invoked than described. Like Jonson's other master values, it is present largely as what cannot be presented or re-presented; it is at once known in advance and what cannot (in the usual discursive sense) be known. Although the question of record in a Jonson poem will often be, "What is friendship?" the answer can only be, "If you have to ask, you couldn't possibly know."

Consider as an example the opening lines of a poem we have already met, "An Epistle to Master Arthur Squib":

What I am not, and what I fain would be,  
Whilst I inform myself, I would teach thee,  
My gentle Arthur, that it might be said  
One lesson we have both learned and well read. (1–4)

In these first four lines the poem repeatedly enacts the closing of its own circle. The first enactment occurs immediately with the negative promise of knowledge that will be withheld ("What I am not"). In the second half of line 1, however, there seems to be an opening outward to the possibility of future revelation ("what I fain would be"), but that possibility is shut down when the indirect object of the verb "inform" is not the reader but "myself." It is revived again by the promise in the phrase "I would teach thee," but that promise is withdrawn when the referent of the pronoun "thee" is pointedly restricted to "My gentle Arthur." The second half of line 3 brings still another promise, of something that "might be said," but it too is disappointed by line 4 which identifies what will be said with a lesson that both Jonson and Squib have already learned and therefore need not learn again.

More starkly than any other poem we have examined, the epistle to Squib displays the determined reticence of an art that refuses to submit itself to scrutiny and judgment. Both the action it performs and the actions it reports look inward toward the already constituted community of observers and readers. Jonson writes the poem only in order to be (apart from Squib from whom he is indistinguishable) its only reader. He will "inform himself" in two senses: he will inform no one but himself, and he will put himself into a form (of a poem that avoids

explicit assertion) that only he and Squib can read because they already possess (and are possessed by) the truth it will not tell; he will spin himself out, and then “turn” his own “threads” (21) so that he might know, in still another and self-confirming way, what he already is. Meanwhile the reader will learn only what he is not. “I neither am, nor art thou, one of those” (5). The list that follows is an inventory of the motives that do *not* animate Jonson and Squib. Neither of them caters mechanically and servilely to the moods of the other (they do not “hearken to a jack’s pulse”). They do not flatter one another in the hope of cadging a meal or a drink (their friendship is not the “issue of the tavern or the spit”). The ties that bind them are not economic (theirs is not a “kindred from the purse”). “These are poor ties, depends on those false ends” (11). One might think that false ends are selfish (self-serving) ends, but when the character of a true friend is finally specified, it turns out to be selfishness in a pure form: “. . . look if he be / Friend to himself that would be friend to thee. / For that is first required, a man be his own” (21–23). Of course this is proverbial (one thinks of Polonius as well as of Seneca and Cicero), but the proverb has a special force in the context of the poem’s insistence on characterizing friendship in asocial terms (a characterization it extends by being itself asocial), as the fruit not of obligations incurred or of deficiencies supplied but of self-sufficient beings whose only claim on one another is that in their independence of all external supports they are the same. He who understands this can then “rest” (25); that is, he need do nothing either to earn or reward friendship. He need simply remain what he already is, and with this currency—which is nothing more or less than his entire being—he will have bought “a richer purchase than of land” (26).

Richard Peterson has noted that in this and other poems, friendship is described in commercial terms—as coin, as a venture, as a harvest-yielding crop—and yet at the same time it is opposed to actions performed in the hope of a literal profit.<sup>14</sup> The counterpoint between two systems of economics, one at work in the greater world, and the other peculiar to the internal and abstract world of the tribe of Ben, is more than a leitmotif in the poetry. It defines with a particular clarity the paradox of a community that is at once expansive and self-enclosed, and it provides Jonson with still another way of declaring unreal the dependence that apparently constrains and defines him. Here a key poem is *Underwood*, no. 13, “An Epistle to Sir Edward Sackville, now Earl of Dorset.” It is a poem addressed by a borrower to a lender—that is, by a beneficiary to a patron—yet it is not a poem of gratitude or supplication, and there is no hint as it develops that the speaker conceives of himself as the subordinate or unequal party in an exchange. Instead, he turns the usual relationship between donor and recipient around by making the acceptance rather than the granting of the favor the crucial act of judgment. Jonson acknowledges that his humble fortune puts him in need of even the “smallest courtesies” (16), but insists that “I make / Yet choice from

whom I take them, and would shame / To have such do me good I durst not name" (17–18). The "noblest" benefit of a gift, he tells us, is more the "memory from whom / Than what he hath received" (21–22). The nobility of the memory attaches to both parties. The recipient is noble because he thinks more on the character of the giver than on the size of his gift; the giver is noble because he displays that character both in his choice of beneficiary and in the manner of his giving. Thus Sackville proves himself a worthy bestower by responding to Jonson's petition before it is made; he does not wait for the poet's "prayers" but moves to "prevent" (11) them by acting as soon as he perceives the need. Indeed, so immediate is his action—it is "done," says Jonson, "as soon as meant" (12)—that it completely short-circuits any sense of sequence. It is as if Jonson never asked for anything at all but was simply the object of a gesture so spontaneous that it seemed to have no cause, no *occasional* stimulus, except for the recognition by one noble nature of another.

That recognition is, as always in Jonson, bidirectional and instantaneous, and leaves no room—no temporal space—for the usual (and invidious) distinctions between creditor and debtor, petitioner and petitioned, client and patron. The entire transaction, not really a transaction at all, is summed up in a quintessential Jonsonian couplet:

For benefits are owed with the same mind,  
As they are done, and such returns they find. (5–6)

This couplet has two literal readings. The first is literal in the context of the usual understanding of the relationship between borrower and lender: one's attitude toward a debt incurred is a function of the manner ("mind") with which the loan has been proffered. But in the context of Jonson's world, the phrase "same mind" has an even more literal meaning and refers to the identity of the two parties. Since Jonson and Sackville are alike manifestations of the virtue that informs them, any benefit one confers on the other is a benefit conferred on himself. In short, benefits are not owed at all, since they are repaid in the very moment when they are bestowed. The return that the giver "finds" is found immediately, in the "credit" that accrues to him for having given proof of his nature by responding "freely" (13–14)—without having been "forced" (24) and with no thought of gain—to one whose nature is the same.

The dynamics of this exchange trace out what every society has vainly sought, an economy that generates its own expansion and is infinitely self-replenishing, an economy in which *everyone gains*. Jonson gains by having his necessities "suscured" (8) even before he names them. Sackville gains by having his gift accepted by someone who is concerned not with the wealth but with the character of his patron. His acceptance is praise and brings honor to the creditor who is thus instantly reimbursed. (In debts as in dinners, "It is the fair acceptance [that]

creates / The entertainment perfect.”)<sup>15</sup> Jonson in his turn gains by receiving credit for having chosen the “noblest” of donors, and that credit returns immediately to Sackville (“such returns they find”) who is doubly crowned, first by having been chosen, and second (although at the very same moment) by having provided his brother with an opportunity to display and “prove” his judgment. Together, by their reciprocal and mutually validating actions, the two men exemplify the poem’s recipe for the perfect—that is, debt-free—relationship between borrower and lender:<sup>16</sup> “Gifts and thanks should have one cheerful face / So each that is done and ta’en becomes a brace” (39–40). “Becomes” is a word whose temporal implications should not be insisted on. Since Jonson and Sackville are already “one cheerful face”—are already acting with the “same mind”—their giving and taking are simultaneous and interchangeable. The true message of the couplet is, as is so often the case in this poetry, tautological: they are a brace because they are a brace.

This perfect economy in which loss is impossible because benefits are continually and effortlessly multiplying is elaborated against the background of the more usual conditions of monetary exchange. When Jonson says that “I who freely know / This good from you as freely will it owe” (13–14), he means that he owes it so freely that he is under no obligation to repay it. Indeed, by freely accepting it, he has already repaid it in the currency of friendship, a currency whose soundness is independent of the more literal repayment that may or may not occur. That independence is the subject of *Underwood*, no. 17, “Epistle to a Friend.” The occasion is Jonson’s failure to repay a debt on the appointed day, and the argument is that his default is in fact a favor, since it provides his creditor with even more opportunities to affirm his “noble nature” and by so doing to enjoy even greater profits than would have been his had the poet been more punctilious:

They are not, sir, worst owers, that do pay  
 Debts when they can; good men may break their day  
 And yet the noble nature never grudge;  
 ’Tis then a crime, when the usurer is judge,  
 And he is not in friendship. Nothing there  
 Is done for gain. (1–6)

When good men break their day, they will do so as good men, that is, with an unconcern that bespeaks their understanding of what is truly valuable in any transaction; and the creditor will match that understanding by never grudging, by not looking “unto the forfeit” (12), by acting with a generosity that reaps a moral harvest “richer” (17) than the return he forgoes. The relationship between this “no-fault” transaction and the stricter accounting of another system of economics is mirrored in the double sense of line 3: “’Tis then a crime when the

usurer is judge." The usurer, judging only by surfaces and inessentials, will see in the poet's default only a crime; and it will be *his* crime—and his loss—that he can see nothing else, that he fails to see the "nothing" or no thing that "knits friends." Because he is not "in friendship" he can claim no share of friendship's freely given and immediately reciprocal rewards. He does everything for gain and thereby cuts himself off from the gains that come unsought to those who by investing their capital in "trust" (14) add to their store in the very act of expending it.

In this and other poems one cannot say whether economics is a metaphor for friendship or friendship a metaphor for economics. The usual terms of tenor and vehicle do not apply, for in their relationship the two systems display the characteristics we have found so often in Jonson's universe. They are mutually convertible, interchangeable, finally indistinguishable; they are the same, and because they are the same, they don't say anything about one another; their equivalence is another means by which the lines of communication in Jonson's world are kept entirely internal. In both, what is hazarded is judgment and in both the investment is its own (and simultaneous) yield, a yield that is shared by the other party with no diminishing of its quantity. Of course the very same account can be given (and has already been given) of the dynamics of praise. Here again judgment is the action and the commodity and its conferring and receiving redound to the honor and credit of both praiser and praised who pass back and forth between them an ever self-augmenting store. And, finally, making a fourth to this family of equivalences, is the writing of poetry, an act which, as Jonson never tires of telling us, carries all the risks and rewards of lending, borrowing, praising, and "friending." All of these interchangeable activities are the multiple yet single subject of *Underwood*, no. 14, "An Epistle to Master John Selden," a poem that will allow us to bring together the various themes we have pursued in this essay.

The poem opens, in the usual fashion, by declaring itself unnecessary:

I know to whom I write. Here I am sure  
Though I am short, I cannot be obscure (1–2)

He knows to whom he writes because he writes to someone exactly like himself. That is why he cannot be obscure. Obscurity is a function of discourse; it occurs when language imperfectly captures an intention which is therefore not "readable" by a receiver or hearer. Obscurity then is a danger or risk attendant on distance, a consequence of the unhappy fact that the speaker (or writer) and hearer are different. But of course they are not. Jonson and Selden are the same; and because they are the same, their intentions are shared, already known to one another, and need not be communicated. Conversely if they were not the same, if they were not mutually constituting members of a self-identifying community,

no quantity of words would be sufficient to produce an understanding that was not already in place. More words are like more money; they cannot purchase something that is finally independent of them.

The occasion of the poem (which will not be short despite its superfluosity) is a quantity of words that Selden has produced in the form of a book. He has sent the book to Jonson for approval, and the poet responds by reflecting analytically on the act and its significance:

Your book, my Selden I have read and much  
Was trusted that you thought my judgment such  
To ask it; though in most of works it be  
A penance, where a man may not be free. (5–8)

The interchangeability of mutually validating actions is mirrored in the surprise that awaits the reader at the beginning of line 6. In line 5, it is Jonson who is acting, and it is natural to expect that “much” is *his* intensifier, to be followed by an active verb like “admired” or “approved.” But instead the verb is passive and Selden is its agent. The two have changed places, or more precisely, they now share (or mutually occupy) a place, the place of judgment. Judgment is what Selden asks for when he sends Jonson the book, but the fact of his sending it is a judgment on Jonson, on his trustworthiness (“much/Was trusted”), and the fact of *that* judgment is a judgment on Selden, on his willingness to submit his work to someone who will evaluate it independently of any consideration of affection or gain. What Selden seeks—a just verdict, a discerning eye—he himself exercises in the very manner of his seeking. He already has what he asks for, and he gives it to his friend in the asking, who can then give it back again by discharging his “office” (9) with no sense that it is a penance, a burden weighted by implicit but powerful pressures. The transaction is like the poem. It is itself already informed by the good it would name, and it is therefore at once superfluous, since everyone (who counts) is already in possession of the sought-for commodity, and profitable, since every expenditure of judgment, if it is true, adds to its own store by redounding to the credit both of the judge and the judged.

Indeed the distinction between judge and judged will not hold because the latter is only getting back what was his in the first place. Whatever praise Selden receives will have been produced not by Jonson but by the self-declaring force of his character and his accomplishments. In a strict sense, then, Jonson is not the author of the poem, but an involuntary witness to the presence of virtue in the world, and he says as much at the beginning of the last section when he cries “I yield, I yield, the matter of your praise / Flows in upon me, and I cannot raise / A bank against it” (61–63). The praise Selden then receives is self-conferred and the poem quite literally and quite typically becomes what it always was, a presentation by its addressee to himself: “Thus enjoy thine own.”



Also typically, the poem now (at line 67) begins: "I first salute thee." But the salute refuses to be limited to Selden. The communication of virtue is, as we have seen in other poems, contagious; its benefits are conferred in multiple and multiplying directions and only increase each time they are divided. The image of a river overflowing its banks precisely captures the quality of a force that is self-replenishing and self-extending, and at that very moment it extends itself to Edward Hayward, the "chamber-fellow" (72) to whom Selden has dedicated his book. In the lines that follow Hayward and Selden act out the same sequence (not really a sequence) of gifts reciprocally given and taken that marks the relationship between Selden and Jonson. Selden gives Hayward the honor of a dedication and receives the honor back immediately, proving himself to be one who prefers to some "great name" (69) an obscure person who "knows to do / It [the book] true respects" (72–73). He can do it true respects because his reading is animated by the very same spirit that moves Selden to write:

. . . he can approve  
And estimate thy pains, as having wrought  
In the same mines of knowledge. (73–75)

Hayward, in short, approves and estimates what he already knows; he approves himself and thus receives from Selden still another gift which is like the first (the dedication itself) immediately, and with profit, returned.

It is returned simultaneously to Jonson who by approving and estimating the pains of both Selden and Hayward shows himself worthy of their fellowship and finds, without seeking it, a like portion of the praise he bestows. The riches of an economy that knows only surplus accrue to him without effort and he exclaims in an excess of joy at the rewards he cannot help but reap:

. . . O how I do count  
Among my comings-in, and see it mount,  
The gain of your two friendships! Hayward and  
Selden: two names that so much understand;  
On whom I could take up, and ne'er abuse  
The credit. (79–84)

He cannot abuse the credit because the line of credit is endless. To draw on it is to replenish it because what you draw on is a reservoir (of friendship) that is augmented by everyone who comes to drink from it. What Jonson gains from the friendship of Hayward and Selden he more than supplies by adding himself to their circle, and as a member of that circle he immediately gains again (and gives again) what he has given to it. He is at once a part of what Hayward and Selden understand—that is, support—and an understander or supporter himself. That shared understanding is so total and so instantaneous, so independent

of language or any other discursive form, that it need not be communicated: "But here's no time, nor place, my wealth to tell, / You both are modest: so am I. Farewell" (85–86). These closing lines are disingenuous, for not only would the telling of his wealth be an act of vulgar self-display, it would be at once unnecessary and impossible: impossible because to tell his wealth, in the sense either of tallying it or reporting it, is to increase it. The counting (or recognizing) of gain is itself a gain and therefore always outruns the attempt to measure it. And would be unnecessary, for those to whom it could be told are themselves what would be told (are pieces of virtue's currency) and therefore already know what they are, while on the other hand, those who do not themselves constitute the wealth could never be told it. The modesty claimed in the last line is a thin mask for the familiar face of exclusion. Jonson reaches out (as he does in so many poems) to those with whom he is already sealed, and as he says to them a superfluous "farewell"—superfluous because they fare well simply by being what they are—he says to the rest of us a farewell that has the unmistakable sound of a closing door.

#### IV

What that door closes on is a society that refuses to display itself and defines itself as the very opposite of that which *shows*. One might say then that everything important that happens in that society (and therefore in Jonson's poetry) happens off stage. And once one says that the way is open to classifying the poetry as anticourtly, for as Frank Whigham has recently observed, "the ideal courtier is *never* offstage," but must continually "shew himself" in order to find an identity in the response and recognition of an audience.<sup>17</sup> So self-consciously rhetorical is courtly life that moral categories themselves are realized as various performative styles. The transcendental suffers a "demotion" (636) and "public opinion takes precedence over one's own moral perception" (635). Even one's sense of his own worth is gained in the theater of courtly conversation. "The judgement which wee have to know our selves is not ours, but wee borrow it of others," writes Stefano Guazzo, indicating the extent to which virtue is equated with reputation and is "radically dependent on the eye and voice of the audience" (637).

It hardly need be said that on very point Jonson is opposed to this vision of a theatrical life. He declares himself secure in a self-knowledge that has nothing to do with reputation. He thinks of himself as one of those who "though opinion stamp them not, are gold" ("An Epistle Answering to One That Asked to be Sealed of the Tribe of Ben," l.4). Indeed, so far is he from courting public recognition that he flees it, and is reluctant even to venture out in speech, lest by "showing so weak an act to vulgar eyes," he "put conscience and my right to

compromise" (7–8). As always, the motion is one of withdrawal (in imitation of the infant of Sagantum) into the fortress of the centered self. It is in order to maintain the security of that fortress, he tells us in *Timber or Discoveries*, "that there was a wall, or parapet of teeth set in our mouth . . . that the rashness of talking should not only be retarded by the guard and watch of our heart; but be fenced in and defended by certain strengths placed in the mouth itself."<sup>18</sup> If, as Heinrich Plett remarks, the courtier lives only as a social being and is in "private 'retreat' . . . a cipher," it is only in private retreat that the Jonsonian self truly lives.<sup>19</sup>

And yet, it would finally be reductive and even wrong to assimilate Jonson's poetry to the category of anticourt satire. Of course there are a few poems—"To the World, A Farewell," "To Sir Robert Wroth," "An Epistle to a Friend, to Persuade Him to the Wars," "On Court-Worm," "To Censorious Courtling," "On Court-Parrot," "To Courtling"—that are obviously satirical, but by and large the body of the poetry lacks something essential to satire, the intention to indict or to reform. The verse is not projected outward into a world it would shape, but inward into a world it would protect. The message is never "go out and remedy these evils," but rather, "keep yourself *safe* from these evils": "Well, with mine own frail pitcher, what to do / I have decreed; keep it from waves and press, / Lest it be jostled, cracked, made nought, or less" ("An Epistle Answering . . .," 55–57). There is a lesson here, to be sure, but it is not exhortative in the usual sense because it is so negative and defensive. In the end, the poetry does not ask us to do anything or even to learn anything. One can say of it finally what can be said of almost no other verse in the period: it is not designed to be *persuasive*. It does not attempt to move its audience, but to push it away, and if the response of three centuries is any measure, it has achieved a strange success.

We end then with a question of motive. Why would anyone write a poetry that does not persuade or teach or assert or present or represent or define or describe or incite? This question is the answer to the question with which we began: how can a poet operating in the world of patronage assert and maintain a claim of independence? As we have seen, Jonson responds to this challenge by writing a poetry which declares unreal the network of dependencies and obligations that to all appearances directs and regulates his every action. It is an extraordinary project, much grander in its way than any Sidney could have imagined when he spoke of poets who deliver a golden world, for it involves a quite brazen act of denial in the midst of what seems irrefutable evidence. There is every visible sign that Jonson is constrained by all the ties ("These are false ties, depend on . . . false ends") that he proceeds to reject. He writes in gratitude or in petition to patrons. He writes on the occasion of the birthday of a king or prince. He writes to courtiers and to booksellers. He writes to creditors. And yet in all of these cases he manages, by a willful act of assertion, to reverse his

subordinate position and declare himself the center of a court and society more powerful and more durable than any that may seem to contain him. It is a classic instance of a familiar psychological strategy. The outsider who must rely on others for favor and recognition imagines himself as the proprietor and arbiter of an internal kingdom whose laws he promulgates and whose entrance he zealously guards, admitting only those he would "call mine."<sup>20</sup> to an elect fellowship. It would be easy to dismiss this strategy as wishful thinking and easier still to see it as a piece of self-deception practiced by a man who is unwilling to deal directly with his own envy and aggression and instead displaces them onto an excoriated and exiled other. But for the present I am content to marvel at the controlled power of a poetry that manages to convince itself—and on occasion manages almost to convince us—that to owe money is already to have repaid it, that to ask a favor is to have granted one, that to praise kings is to exercise majesty, and that in the very posture of supplication and dependence one can nevertheless be perfectly free.

## Notes

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1. *The Rise of Professionalism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1977). Citations appear in the text.
2. Robert Harding, "Corruption and the Moral Boundaries of Patronage in the Renaissance," in *Patronage in the Renaissance*, ed. Guy Fitch Lytle and Stephen Orgel (Princeton, 1981), pp. 54–56.
3. For perceptive observations on Jonson's use of negative constructions, see Richard C. Newton, "Ben./Jonson: The Poet in the Poems," in *Two Renaissance Mythmakers: Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson* (Baltimore and London, 1977), pp. 165–95. Unless otherwise noted all citations are to *Ben Jonson's Poems*, ed. Ian Donaldson (London, Oxford, and New York, 1975).
4. Here the text I am using is *The Complete Poetry of Ben Jonson*, ed. William B. Hunter, Jr. (New York, 1963).
5. *The Curious Perspective* (New Haven, 1978), p. 38.
6. Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court* (London and Berkeley, 1973), p. 2.
7. On this and related points see Harris Friedberg's excellent essay, "Ben Jonson's Poetry: Pastoral, Georgic, Epigram," *English Literary Renaissance*, 4 (1974), 115–16.
8. Here I am again using William B. Hunter, Jr.'s text.
9. For the relationship between Jonson's antitheatricality and his ideal of the "unmoved personality" see Jonas Barish, "Jonson and the Loathed Stage," in *A Celebration of Ben Jonson*, ed. William Blissett, Julian Patrick, and R.W. Van Fossen (Toronto and Buffalo, 1972), pp. 38, 45, 50. As Barish rightly observes, "worth, in the Jonsonian universe, as in that of his Stoic guides, is virtually defined as an inner and hence an invisible quality" (45). On the relationship between names and the moral status of both the named and the namer see Martin Elsby, "Words, Things, and Names: Jonson's Poetry

- and Philosophical Grammar," in *Classic and Cavalier: Essays on Jonson and the Sons of Ben*, ed. Ted-Larry Pebworth and Claude Summers (Pittsburgh, 1983).
10. Richard Peterson, *Imitation and Praise in the Poems of Ben Jonson* (New Haven and London, 1981), p. 85.
  11. Wesley Trimpi, *Ben Jonson's Poetry: A Study of the Plain Style* (Stanford, 1962), pp. 9, 41.
  12. Thomas Greene, "Ben Jonson and the Centered Self," *Studies in English Literature*, 10 (1970), 329.
  13. Edmund Wilson, "Morose Ben Jonson," in *The Triple Thinkers* (New York, 1948), pp. 220, 219. In an attempt to defend Jonson against Wilson's charges, his admirers have in large part succeeded only in producing the poet of smooth urbanity that appears in most of our accounts. For an exception see the stimulating essay by Arthur Marotti, "All About Jonson's Poetry," *ELH*, 39 (1972), 208–37.
  14. Peterson, *Imitation and Praise*, p. 227.
  15. *Inviting a Friend to Supper*, ll. 7–8.
  16. The relationship is exemplified in still another way by the fact that much of the poem is "borrowed" from Seneca's *De Beneficiis*. Jonson's relationship to his sources precisely parallels his relationship with his creditors; he honors both by taking from them and he is honored in turn by the wisdom of his choice.
  17. Frank Whigham, "Interpretation at Court: Courtesy and the Performer-Audience Dialectic," *New Literary History*, XIV (Spring, 1983), 634.
  18. *Ben Jonson: The Complete Poems*, ed. George Parfitt (Baltimore, 1975), pp. 384–85.
  19. Heinrich F. Plett, "Aesthetic Constituents in the Courtly Culture of Renaissance England," *New Literary History*, vol. XIV (Spring, 1983), 613.
  20. "An Epistle Answering . . ." l. 74. See, for a discerning discussion of the difficulty of being a laureate poet within a system of courtly patronage, pp. 165–79 of Richard Helgerson's *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1983).

## The Script in the Marketplace

*Sunt quidam qui me dicant non esse poetam:  
sed qui me vendit bybliopola putat*

—Martial, *Epigrams* 14.194

THE LIST OF BEN JONSON'S permanent contributions to English literary convention—at the prosodic level, the perfection of the pentameter couplet as an epistolary form and the development of the casually impressive truncated tetrameter line; at the dramaturgic level, the institution of what might be called a comedy of fixation; at the social level, the construction of a literary coterie (the nearest model, the Sidney "circle," being merely a slight elaboration on the aristocratic household)—has regularly included that major contribution to the development of literary marketing, the publication of the folio *Workes of Benjamin Jonson*.<sup>1</sup> The volume appeared in 1616, well before it could be decently represented as posthumous. This publication has frequently been remarked on, but such remark has almost inevitably subsided into reflections on Jonson's vanity; in these more sympathetic times, we incline to speak of the *charm* of his vanity.<sup>2</sup> I should like to treat the event a bit more technically and insist that critical responses to Jonson's authorial vanity are in fact quite telling; that we make such remarks is offhanded testimony to the permanent effects of this particular event of publication, indirect evidence that the 1616 *Workes* marks a major event in the history of what one might call the bibliographic ego.

That history could be written in a variety of ways. Perhaps the most powerful recent historian of print culture, Elizabeth Eisenstein, has suggested that the new standardization in the canon of fact precipitated a special sense of individual idiosyncrasy; as the idea of a Standard obtrudes, the articulation of Difference becomes possible.<sup>3</sup> Eisenstein has also described, in remarkable detail, the mechanisms by which printing conferred powers of intellectual origination on members of the Republic of Letters.<sup>4</sup> Within the province of her methods more could perhaps be made of the way print stimulated a competitive relation between book and person, a competition for preeminence as the locus of intellectual summation.<sup>5</sup> But within the tradition of research of which Eisenstein's work is itself certainly the *summa*, surprisingly little has been made of the effects of the literary marketplace on the development of the bibliographic ego.<sup>6</sup> Yet the economic and legal organization of that marketplace surely deserve critical scrutiny. (This is to leave aside the crucial, related question of the effects of state repressions, cen-

sorship, on the bibliographic ego, one that the late Michel Foucault only broached and that Annabel Patterson has taken up.)<sup>7</sup>

One could take any number of figures as useful case studies; because of their peculiar relation to the mechanisms of printing and publication, Caxton, Erasmus, Rabelais, and Cervantes each suggest themselves. I have chosen Jonson for scrutiny precisely because his career in the literary marketplace, his relation to the mechanisms of making the written word pay, was particularly various. He sold plays to acting companies—some of them clearly commissioned but some written, as is the bulk of modern literary production, on speculation.<sup>8</sup> He acted in plays, itself an important market activity, since performance was the culture's primary means of dramatic *publication* during most of Jonson's career. He sold masques to the court. He also participated in the older, chancier literary market, circulating verse in manuscript and so making direct and indirect appeals for patronage. And, of course, he also sold verse to a publisher, a member of the Stationers' Company, for dissemination in print. A various career—but even such description fails to do justice to the complexity with which Jonson engaged these literary markets.

To take a special case: plays were sold to acting companies for a flat fee, usually of six to ten pounds.<sup>9</sup> Strictly speaking, authors had no further rights to their works, though the matter is not *quite* so simple as some bibliographic historians suggest, since printers conventionally gave limited privileges of revision to authors.<sup>10</sup> Technically, however, the situation of authors was extremely stark: a Renaissance author never quite *owned* a literary work, or at least not a literary work as we now somewhat abstractly conceive it. (The development of such an abstract notion of literary work was a slow process: it depended on—among other things—the expansion of authorial rights within the seventeenth-century literary market. It was an expansion in which Jonson's career is a crucial stage.) Strictly speaking, a playwright owned a copy of a play, a manuscript distinguishable from a scribal copy only by the fact that it was a unique copy. Only in the hands of an acting company did the work begin to acquire abstract property values that needed protection: the right to exclusive performance and the right to control the reproduction of the manuscript, either by release to a scrivener or by sale of a copy to a printer or publisher.<sup>11</sup> If this formulation seems oddly schematic, it can be specified in conventional literary terms. On the margins of dramatic representation—in inductions and epilogues—the Elizabethan play is regularly represented by the speaking actor as “ours,” the possession and, indeed, the product of the actors. Where the playwright is mentioned, he is almost never “the Author” or “the Playwright”; he is “our poet,” an adjunct to the proprietary group of performers. Of course, playwrights almost always wrote the prologues to their scripts. Still, the marketplace was such that authorial assertions of preeminent domain were all but unthinkable.

All but unthinkable for most playwrights. Still, in 1614, Jonson would hilar-

iously usurp the company's rights in one of his inductions. A Prompter intrudes on the stage, "not for want of a *Prologue*, but by way of a new one," and he is accompanied by a Scrivener, who brings a contract from the author—the stage is crowded with adjuncts to the truly "publishing" actors.<sup>12</sup> These "Articles of Agreement, indented, between the *Spectators* or *Hearers*, at the *Hope* on the Bankside, in the County of *Surrey* on the one party; and the *Author*" must be approved before the play can begin.

INPRIMIS, It is covenanted and agreed, by and betweene the parties abovesaid, and the said *Spectators*, and *Hearers*, aswell the curious and envious, as the favouring and judicious, as also the grounded Judgements and understandings, doe for themselves severally Covenant, and agree to remaine in the places, their money or friends have put them in, with patience, for the space of two houres and an halfe, and somewhat more. In which time the *Author* promisetth to present them by us, with a new sufficient Play called *BARTHOLMEW FAYRE*, merry, and as full of noise, as sport.<sup>13</sup>

He drives a hard bargain: the extent of a spectator's right of censure is to be kept proportionate to the price of his seat; the spectator is entitled only to his own opinion, and none other's; he agrees to expect nothing more exciting than mimetic consistency allows; and he is to protect the play from topical construction and the playwright from the sort of punitive censure that had already twice landed Jonson in prison. But what is most striking for my purposes about this contract is the agency of the author within the transaction, Jonson's claim to be presenting the play through a subsidiary acting company—"by us," as the actor says. Certainly the very idea of a market is under examination in *Bartholomew Fair*, but the induction is perhaps the most radical moment in the play's market analysis.<sup>14</sup> The induction purports to *change* the literary market contractually; further, it represents Jonson, and not the Lady Elizabeth's Servants, as the true publisher of the play.

*Bartholomew Fair* comes well along in Jonson's career, and it is by no means the first of his attempts to reshape literary market relations. Certainly the transformation of an acting company from proprietor into middleman—into middleman at best—had already been effectively achieved, if only at the Banqueting House at Whitehall. As masque maker, Jonson had been compensated directly by his audience, and at a rate approximately four times that paid by an acting company for one of his plays.<sup>15</sup> It was an arrangement that Jonson was reluctant to surrender as a public playwright. I take it that the induction to *Bartholomew Fair* spoofs that reluctance, though the spoofing is more than a little disruptive. The story of Jonson's disruptive career in the literary marketplace begins much earlier, however, for even his earliest years as a playwright were marked with dissatisfaction.

In the late 1590s Jonson was working for the theatrical manager Philip Henslowe, though it would not be far from the truth to say that he was *indentured* to Henslowe. In July 1597 Jonson had gone to jail for his work on *The Isle of Dogs*,



and Henslowe had lent him money to help defray his prison expenses.<sup>16</sup> He was back in jail twice in the next year and a half, once for killing Gabriel Spencer and once for debt; Henslowe again assisted him on at least the latter occasion, binding Jonson—formally or informally—to continued hackwork for Henslowe's company, the Admiral's Men. Jonson's dissatisfaction with working for Henslowe shows itself in a variety of ways. Though Jonson had a hand in a number of Henslowe plays (he wrote only one, *Richard Crookback*, unassisted), none of these plays find their way into the Folio. Moreover, Jonson started writing for other companies: in the same season that he lay indebted at Marshalsea Prison, the Chamberlain's Men were performing *Every Man in His Humour* to what seems to have been considerable popular acclaim. But he not only began peddling his talents elsewhere, he took steps toward peddling different talents, having himself confirmed as a full member of the Bricklayers' guild sometime during 1598 or 1599. He may have done so in order to secure the rights as a citizen of London that full guild membership carried with it, but, given his recent fortunes as a playwright, it is not altogether certain that he wasn't thinking of getting out.

In fact, there were a number of good reasons for getting out. Henslowe had regularly roped him into literary collaborations, linking him with men like Henry Chettle, whom he disrespected, or with the likes of John Marston, whom he at best distrusted. Collaboration seems to have soured even Jonson's rapport with Thomas Dekker—Jonson suffered communal creation badly throughout his career. These particular collaborations were no doubt the breeding ground for the so-called War of the Theaters, not so much a war as a series of minute and pettish skirmishes between Jonson and the Marston-Dekker alliance.<sup>17</sup> (When Rosenkrantz speaks of those who "so berattle the common stages [so they call them] that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goosequills and dare scarce come thither" [*Hamlet* 2.2], he casts himself as a partisan of Marston and Dekker, drawing on the specific terms of their attacks on Jonson.) Their attacks usually focus on his scorn for both audiences and actors—the "antitheatricality" of which Jonas Barish has written so eloquently—and on his own persistent complaints of poverty.<sup>18</sup> The sense of unfair impoverishment must have been subtly exacerbated by his isolation from the spheres of gainful publication.

I am not merely referring to the successes that the Chamberlain's company was having with the Humours plays—Jonson's first "comedies of fixation." True, these successes, which culminate in the winter of 1599–1600 when *Every Man Out of His Humour* was selected for performance at court, redounded to the profit of the actors, though not of the poet. But performance was not, after all, the only sphere of profitable publication. The nineties also saw a lively market in *printed* plays; an acting company might publish one of its literary properties for a variety of reasons.<sup>19</sup> When a play's drawing power began to subside, the company might have been willing to sacrifice its exclusive right to disseminate a work (in the theater) for the sake of even the two pounds or so that the sale of a

printer's copy might bring in. Alfred Pollard suggested that, when plague closed the theaters, such sales might have been a welcome source of income.<sup>20</sup> Pollard's argument is not extraordinarily persuasive—two pounds could not have made a great difference to an acting company deprived of a season's revenues—but then he was intent on proving the stout goodness and sturdy pluck of the typical Elizabethan and so missed the obvious conclusion to be drawn from such sales: surely they always constituted efforts on the part of the acting companies to forestall the printing of corrupt copies, texts pirated by actors suddenly down—or down lower—on their luck. Indeed, by the late nineties, piracy—the market in what Heminge and Condell refer to in their introductory letter to the Shakespeare Folio as “stolne, and surreptitious copies”—was a problem of sufficient proportions that Henslowe and others occasionally took to paying registration fees to the Stationers' Court of Assistants simply in order to secure exclusive rights to print texts (rights that they had no intention of exercising). Since only the registrant of a manuscript had rights to publish it this procedure enabled an acting company to stay possibly unauthorized printings.<sup>21</sup> The printshop and the theater were, in many ways, competitors: staying registration constituted the theater's attempt to buy off the competition.

This was, of course, completely irregular: it was generally understood that only members of the Stationers' Company had rights of registration. But the fact of piracy and the incidence of such “blocking” registration of plays suggest how unsettled was the state of literary property at the time. In fact, Stationers' copy-right, the right guaranteed by registration, was hardly a property right at all: not generated out of common law, copyright was merely a mechanism produced by the internal workings of the guild itself, a right to print conferred by the guild and guaranteed as exclusive simply in order to regulate internal competition between the individual booksellers, publishers, and printers who made up the Company.<sup>22</sup> The external mechanisms of royal censorship had complemented and confused themselves with the Stationers' internal regulations since early in the century; between licensing and registration, complicated and flexible conventions had developed around copyright, but in such a way as to avoid any elaboration of ideas of literary property. Indeed, it would be fair to say that the modern issue of who *owns* literary work was effectively preempted, if not mooted, by the original structures of copyright: printers and authors could be punished for sedition and rights to print given texts could be disputed, all without any appeal to laws governing ownership *per se*.

Late in the century, copyright began to prove insufficiently flexible, by which I mean that the regulation of the literary marketplace began to falter in historically significant ways. The eighties saw the rebellion of several of the younger, less well-established printers.<sup>23</sup> Led by John Wolfe, technically a fishmonger, they attacked the wealthier stationers for monopoly of the most profitable copyrights; no amount of internal regulation had succeeded in producing an equitable dis-

tribution of profits within the Company, with the result that a certain amount of competition for publishable manuscripts became normal within the guild. The printing of pirated copies was only an inadequate solution for the marginalized printer, who really wanted his hands on such books as the *ABC*, but it began to flourish despite its inadequacies, and without—it must be insisted—much benefiting authors. For reasons not yet entirely clear, piracy seems to have focused on the manuscripts of aristocratic writers, or dead ones (the manuscripts of whose works were apparently more easy to come by) and on plays, actors having been somewhat unscrupulous about guarding company property. Here we *can* speak of something very like property, and something very like a violation of property rights: within the theater, more than within the book trade, imperfectly rationalized economic relations and a marketplace made harrowingly unstable by plague and censor generated a new kind of theft and a new kind of ownership. Authors had been compensated, by stationers or, in the case of playwrights, by acting companies, for little more than the scribal labor of generating a unique but reproducible text—a scribal and not a creative act.<sup>24</sup> But now that plays were being sold by acting companies and pirated by individual actors or individual stationers, an economic value relatively autonomous from either the author's scribal labor or the stationer's reproductive and disseminative labor began to inhere in scripts.

The confusion in the literary marketplace can hardly be underestimated. Jonson's repeated protestations on behalf of the dignity of poesy derive not only from the Sidneian tradition of poetic defense but also from his nascent awareness of the new value that was beginning to accrue to dramaturgy within this disorderly market. He had been the victim of the censorious, punitive side of literary regulation, having been imprisoned for *The Isle of Dogs* (and there was a similar imprisonment, for *Eastward Ho!*, to come), and he had been excluded from the shady rewards of the newly quickened market in plays. He was determined to change his relation to that market.

He wrote *Cynthia's Revels*. It is not a great play, but its flaws are seldom the products of inadvertencies. Jonson's program in the play was simple: he was seeking court patronage, attempting to extricate himself from the confused literary market of the public theaters and to insert himself into what might be called a neoconservative patronage market. Since *Cynthia's Revels* was originally performed at Blackfriars, a private theater, it might be said to have come as close as possible to straddling both spheres. This program of relocation is manifest quite awkwardly at the generic level, as an attempt to fuse the techniques of public Humours comedy with those of the most immediately accessible model for a court dramaturgy, the mythological comedies of John Lyly. Lyly had recently lost the reversion of the Mastership of the Revels, and *Cynthia's Revels* is Jonson's rather unsubtle hint that he could easily take Lyly's place.<sup>25</sup> The spatial plot of the play enacts the ideal career: for four acts the characters eddy about in the

outer rooms of Cynthia's palace, taunting the virtuous poet, Crites, and engaging in games of self-display, in a kind of public theater. As the fourth act closes, Crites suddenly receives the gracious attention of Cynthia's handmaid, Arete, who brings news of preferment: he is commissioned to write a masque. What distinguishes the play are its lyrics—the anthology pieces “Slow, slow, fresh fount” and “Queen, and huntresse, chaste and fair”—verse that could fairly be called antitheatrical. Jonson would surely endorse the assessment.

The fifth act culminates in the descent of Cynthia within the inner spaces of her palace, a descent that gives the virtuous “space to breathe, how short soever” (5.4.16). That breathing space is taken up with the performance of Crites' masque, in which the figures of vice satirized in the first four acts are forced to perform as their own virtuous counterparts, constrained by costume and context to noble demeanor. Thus the largest structure of the play corresponds with striking fidelity to the plan of Jonson's mature masques. Such prolepsis is worth a moment's scrutiny. This structural homology was hardly lost on Jonson himself, for when he revised the play for the Folio, after years of masque making, he rewrote the fifth act so that that single comprehensible unit became unmistakably masque-like in structure: a mock duel in the arts of courtiership between Crites and Amorphus, a public performance repeatedly referred to as an “Act” or an “Action,” which gives way to the theophany of Cynthia and the performance of Crites' masque proper.<sup>26</sup> The act, then, is an antimasque and masque. It is also a biography. Crites begins the act as an actor, trapped within the constraints of public theatricality; he ends the act as patronized poet, a legislator of aestheticized morals.

To remark the autobiographical paradigm within act 5 of *Cynthia's Revels* is thus also to remark the same paradigm in Jonson's Jacobean masques. The progress from Disorder to Order has private resonances: the antimasques, performed by professional actors, are superseded—disabled, really—by the decorous masquing of aristocratic revelers, many of whom became Jonson's patrons. To some extent this structural autobiography is a wish-fulfillment; insofar as the device of the main masque could be scripted it expresses a desire not merely for patronage but for a patronage that would function as a controlled economy in which poet, not patron, regulates the marketplace.

If the performance of *Cynthia's Revels* constitutes an attempt to find a different literary marketplace, and the performance of the masques *allegorizes* the success of that attempt, the publication of the masques must stand as a sign of Jonson's dissatisfaction with mere relocation. Many of the masques, like *Cynthia's Revels*, place a poet-figure on stage and dramatize his control by giving him extraordinary cohortative power. It is a magical power, compared to which the contractual intervention of the author in *Bartholomew Fair* must seem mere parody, but it is a power that succeeds in reducing the actors to mediators. Publication completes the displacement of the performers both as a representational and as

an economic fact. For the first time we find Jonson evading the Henslowes of London and selling his copy-texts directly to printers.

We cannot know the terms of these sales, though there is some reason to suspect that Jonson was mainly paid in presentation copies, so that whatever advances are made toward the interpellation of dramatic poets as significant participants in the book trade are transformed into a regression toward a patronage economy. If this is (as I have called it) a neoconservative development, it is remarkable nonetheless, a development entirely consistent with the issues at stake in Jonson's famous quarrel with Inigo Jones.<sup>27</sup> For that controversy is not merely an extended reenactment of the War of the Theaters, with Jonson once more displaying his antitheatrical prejudice—though it is surely this—it is a quarrel about the very ontology of the work of art. The debate with Jones over what constitutes the “soul” of the masque marks an important stage in the cultural history of literary artifacts. Jonson insists on the abstract endurance of the masque—that is the primary force of his emphasis from the “present occasions” of performance, ready to display its transcendence of moment and medium.<sup>28</sup> In the published version of *Hymenaei*, Jonson speaks of the printed text itself as the ideal form of the masque as if, in quarto, the soul of the masque could be raised a spiritual body. I would argue that as Jonson intruded himself on the mechanisms of print publication—revising, annotating, correcting print runs—in the course of all this, he strengthened his conception both of the abstraction of the work of art and of his own proprietary interest in that abstraction.

The interested publication of the masques, which simultaneously abstracted the literary work and embedded it in the intimate transactions between poet and stationer, seems, then, to have been an important determinant in Jonson's subsequent interest in his plays. His increased sense of propriety gives us the sober humor of the contract in *Bartholomew Fair*; his sense of intimacy with the print market gives us the tart assertiveness of the title page to his late play, *The New Inn* (published 1631, but first performed in 1629), in which the play is advertised as “A Comedy. As it was never acted, but most negligently play'd, by some, the Kings Servants. And more squeamishly beheld, and censured by others, the Kings Subjects,” a clear sign that Jonson had provided the copy text to the printer—pirating his plays himself, as it were. In fact, the publication of the masques is to a large extent a necessary step toward the printing of the 1616 Folio. When an anonymous poet praised the volume in *Wits Recreation*, he caught a crucial Jonsonian distinction:

The authors friend thus for the author sayes,  
Beis plays are works, when others works are plaies.<sup>29</sup>

The Folio, if not nondramatic, is at least an antitheatrical *Workes*. But it is more than that. We know little of how the printer William Stansby gained control of the copyrights to all of Jonson's printed plays, but he did so, and he thus enabled

Jonson to recover that authority over the printed texts which he had enjoyed when he prepared the masques for printing. Disabling the proprietary intrusion of acting companies, Jonson revised many of his plays drastically for the Folio, sometimes changing settings, always relocating them from stage to page.

I do not wish to suggest that Jonson's partial recovery of authority over his texts settles his status in the literary marketplace, or that the abstraction of literary value to which the Folio bears testimony is to be traced exclusively to Jonson's experience as a masque maker. There are, of course, other influences on his thinking.<sup>30</sup> Few Englishmen had so deep a sense of the autonomous vitality of classical literature, works whose value had transcended the history of their reproduction and which were perceived as vessels of enduring authority. Their authors were estimable, their value was abstract: the literature of antiquity provided what might be called an ideological model, if not an ontological one, for the literature of the present.<sup>31</sup> Thus the title, *Workes*, was not offered simply as an alternative to "plays"; the title enacts a complex act of translation and imitation with respect to those classic *Opera*, of Horace or of Virgil, whose prestige depends on authors who have no interest whatsoever in the modern literary marketplace.

Early in the collection of Jonson's *Epigrams*, first published in the *Workes*, a poem addressed to the Bookseller entreats him not to advertise; Jonson is by no means committed to the competitive modern market in books—or at least will not make a public commitment to such modernity. Giving the bookseller leave to esteem the volume according to its sales, but refusing to condone any active appeal to a consuming public, Jonson presents himself as a man ambiguously engaged with the literary marketplace.<sup>32</sup> He dedicates all of his newly recovered plays in the Folio either to people or to institutions, adapting the modern technology of dissemination to an archaic patronage economy. His are among the first dedicated texts of *printed* drama in the history of the English theater, and the sense of novelty ought to outweigh the sense of regression here. It is a *neo-conservative* move, a groping forward toward later authorial property rights within a bourgeois cultural marketplace, but modeled on the ethos of the classical *auctor* and the economics of patronage: the investment of proprietary rhetoric in the author of a printed play is a major step toward the modernization of authorship.<sup>33</sup>

Admittedly, some of Jonson's contemporaries were making related advances: Spenser too aspired to a neoclassical *auctoritas* even as he committed his English epic to print. But one can faithfully generalize that Spenser's relation to the literary marketplace is altogether different. For Spenser, the printed page is not an alternative to the public stage; it is an alternative to a privacy perhaps unfitting the *epic* poet. Moreover, he came to find print imperiled, not liberating: print exposes him to a censorious state, and then provides him with a sphere of complex self-defense. Spenser shows none of Jonson's *zeal* for publicity. To go further, to suggest that Spenser was so much more insulated from the chaos of

the late Elizabethan urban economy, so landed, that he never developed Jonson's "market" mind—to do this would perhaps overextend my argument. Suffice it to say that Jonson's career may participate in more "progressive" trends in the history of the bibliographic ego. Not until 1709 did the Statute of Anne formally locate the origins of literary property rights in *authors*, as opposed to stationers, but the publication of Jonson's *Folio Workes* nearly a century earlier marks a crucial moment in that history of the cultural marketplace, and in the history of the bibliographic ego, from which later developments in legal history derive.

## Notes

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This essay is based on a paper presented in a section on "Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson" at the 1983 Modern Language Association convention, New York.

1. The *Workes* were printed by William Stansby. To the catalogue of Jonson's literary contributions might be added what John Hollander suggests may be the central one, in the area of poetics. In "Ben Jonson and the Modality of Verse," in *Vision and Resonance* (Oxford, 1975), 165–86, he argues that Jonson is the first English man to attempt an importation into vernacular poetics of that principle of classical versification which sharply distinguishes between the modalities, or generic associations, of various meters.
2. Some of these responses to the *Workes* are recorded in volume 9 of the eleven-volume edition of the *Works of Benjamin Jonson* by C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford, 1925–52), 12. All citations of Jonson in this essay are taken from that edition.
3. See Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1979), particularly pp. 79–85. See also George Sarton's seminal "The Quest for Truth," in *The Renaissance: Six Essays* (New York, 1962); as well as John U. Nef, *Cultural Foundations of Industrial Civilization* (Cambridge, 1958), 8–17, 26–29, on exactitude; and Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *L'Apparition du livre* (Paris, 1958), 477–78, on linguistic correctness.
4. Eisenstein, *Printing Press*, 84–85, 119–26, and *passim*. E. P. Goldschmidt provides an elegant formulation of the shift toward the origivative that print makes possible in his *Medieval Texts and Their First Appearance in Print* (London, 1943): "The invention of printing did away with many of the technical causes of anonymity, while at the same time the movement of the Renaissance created new ideas of literary fame and intellectual property" (116).
5. This competition is, of course, initiated with the advent of writing, as Plato's *Phaedrus* demonstrates; the Platonic Socrates fears that writing will erode the authority of human memory. For a discussion of the persistent competition between scribal and oral mnemonics in England, see M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, 1066–1307* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979). Print exacerbates the competition, eventually displacing the authority of persons. Walter Ong's *The Presence of the Word* (New Haven, 1967) is a sustained meditation on the relation of verbal technologies to polemical authority. Stephen Greenblatt suggests, in his discussion of William Tyndale, that the repressive activities of Reformation and Counterreformation tend to regard book and person

as indiscriminable, or at least interchangeable, for both may be burnt; see his "The Word of God in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago, 1980).

6. Eisenstein provides a fine survey of this research in the course of her "Introduction to an Elusive Transformation," part 1 of her *magnum opus* (*Printing Press*, 3–159); see also her *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1983). Walter Ong's *Orality and Literacy* (London, 1982) has a broader focus, as it treats generally of the cultural effects of transformations in verbal technologies as well as of the nature of oral consciousness; Ong's book can function as an extremely lucid bibliographic essay on these large topics. For discussions of research on scribal and print culture, see pp. 78–138. Perhaps the first major address to the problem is, of course, Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographical Man* (Toronto, 1962), from which the following enunciation of the fundamental principle of research in this field derives: "When technology extends one of our senses, a new translation of culture occurs as swiftly as the new technology" (40).

More concerned with the historical *sociology* of print culture are Natalie Zemon Davis, "Printing and the People," *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, Calif., 1975), 189–227; Henri-Jean Martin, *Livre, pouvoir et société à Paris au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, 1598–1701* (Geneva, 1969); and Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900* (Chicago, 1963). Relevant, theoretically, to these sociological inquiries is Raymond Williams's general argument in *The Sociology of Culture* (New York, 1982).

There are exceptions to my generalization about the neglect of the literary marketplace to be found in literary scholarship treating of later periods of English cultural history; see A. S. Collins, *Authorship in the Days of Johnson: Being a Study in the Relation Between Author, Patron, Publisher and Public, 1726–1780* (London, 1927).

7. Michel Foucault raises the matter in his provocative essay, "What Is an Author?" in *Textual Strategies*, ed. Josue V. Harari (Ithaca, N.Y., 1979), 141–60; his nearly exclusive concentration on the effect of the censoriousness of Church and State on the development of modern authorship has been salutary, though it slights the effect of the *market* in books on that development. To his suggestions about the politics of authorship must be added a political economy of the book. Annabel Patterson's recent contribution to a theory of the English bibliographic ego is *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison, Wis., 1984). There is a considerable body of literature on the history of censorship; particularly suggestive for a theory of the bibliographic ego are Martin, *Livre, pouvoirs et société*; David T. Pottinger, *The French Book Trade in the Ancient Regime, 1500–1791* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958); and, above all, Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Glencoe, Ill., 1952), which anticipates, in many ways, the Foucauldian notion of a discourse precipitated by marginalization and constraint.
8. By a text written "on speculation" I mean one that anticipates its own value, either within a patronage system or, as a commodity, within the nascent book market. Note that even texts addressed to the patronage system are by and large "speculative": their dedications are often an appeal for future patronage and not a response to prior gifts.
9. This is the range given by E. K. Chambers, based primarily on the record of payments in Philip Henslowe's diaries, in *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1923), 1:373. Six pounds seems to have been the norm, though, for which see Walter W. Greg's summary of the evidence in his edition of *Henslowe's Diaries*, 2 vols. (London, 1904–8),



- 2:126–27. The price of plays seems to have begun rising in the reign of James I, though no documentary evidence comparable to the Henslowe diaries is available for the period; by the second decade of the seventeenth century the range of payments may have extended as high as twenty pounds; see Chambers, as well as Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Profession of the Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time* (Princeton, 1971), 97–110.
10. See Lyman Ray Patterson's useful discussion of the personal rights (as opposed to property rights) implicit, if unformulated, in Stationers' copyright in *Copyright in Historical Perspective* (Nashville, Tenn., 1968), 70–77; Patterson corrects such extremist positions as, for example, that which H. G. Aldis enunciates in "The Book Trade, 1557–1625," *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, 15 vols. (Cambridge, 1907–27), 4:432–73.
  11. This brings me into slight disagreement with the gist of Timothy Murray's assertion in "From Foul Sheets to Legitimate Model: Antitheater, Text, Ben Jonson," *New Literary History* 14 (1983): 641–64, that "a text that might have been precious to its maker was but a theatrical commodity to the players" (646; but see his p. 652 for modifications of his position). His essay is a brilliant extension of Jonas Barish's "Ben Jonson and the Loathed Stage," in *A Celebration of Ben Jonson*, ed. W. Blissett, J. Patrick, and R. Van Fossen (Toronto, 1973), 27–53.
  12. *Bartholomew Fair*, induction, line 58.
  13. *Ibid.*, lines 64–66, 73–82.
  14. My sense of the play's market analysis is heavily indebted to an essay by Jonathan Haynes, "Festivity and the Dramatic Economy of *Bartholomew Fair*," *ELH* 51 (1984): 635–68.
  15. Jonson was usually paid forty pounds for a masque; on expenditures for masques see Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, 1:207–12.
  16. Henslowe's records of his transactions with Jonson are reprinted in Herford and Simpson, *Works*, 11:307–8. On the virtual indenture of playwrights to Henslowe, see Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, 1:374–76.
  17. There is a large body of literature on the "War"; I have found the following accounts the most fruitful: Roscoe A. Small, *The Stage Quarrel Between Ben Jonson and the So-Called Poetasters* (Breslau, Germ., 1899); Oscar James Campbell, *Comical Satyre and Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida* (San Marino, Calif., 1938); Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* (New York, 1952), 90–119; and Stuart Omans, "The War of the Theaters: An Approach to Its Origins, Development and Meaning" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1969). I make a very modest contribution to thinking about the "War" in "A Resonant Place: Traditions of Echo and the Jonsonian Masque" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1982), 235–39 and 272–75.
  18. See Jonas Barish, "Ben Jonson and the Loathed Stage," a discussion extended in his book *The Anti-theatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley, 1981). And see also the essay by Timothy Murray cited in note 11 above.
  19. On the various possible motives for a company's printing plays, see Alfred W. Pollard, *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates and the Problems of the Transmission of His Text*, 2nd ed., revised, with an introduction (Cambridge, 1920), 35–52; and Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, 3:183–92. See also the study by Leo Kirschbaum referred to in note 21 below.
  20. Pollard, *Shakespeare's Fight*, 41–42.
  21. The famous phrase appears in the prefatory letter to the Shakespeare Folio, "To the great Variety of Readers," fol. A3. The mechanisms of "blocking" registration have been discussed by a variety of bibliographers; I find Leo Kirschbaum's general account,

- in *Shakespeare and the Stationers* (Columbus, Ohio, 1955), 197–209, the most persuasive, though his conjectural interpretation of the *details* of the relationship between guild and acting company (209–34) is not always compelling.
22. Thus Patterson, *Copyright in Historical Perspective*: “An important aspect of the company’s regulation of publication was the control it exercised over the disposition of copies. The stationer’s copyright was limited to members of the company, and on the death of the owner, the copyright was disposed of by the company” (47). Hence his crucial remark on the genealogy of modern literary property: “When copyright was established as a formal legal concept by statute, the draftsmen of the statute used the stationer’s copyright as their model” (43).
  23. See Cyprian Blagden, “The English Stock of the Stationers’ Company,” *The Library*, 5th ser., 10 (1955): 163–85, particularly pp. 164–73; and Patterson, *Copyright in Historical Perspective*, 91–113.
  24. Thus the author makes possible *others’* exclusive practices; when an author sold a manuscript, he was conveying a property that could then be claimed as susceptible to monopoly behavior. See Patterson, *Copyright in Historical Perspective*, 68–69 and 73.
  25. For a discussion of Lyly’s influence on *Cynthia’s Revels*, and of Jonson’s aspirations to Lyly’s earlier position, see my *Responsive Readings: Versions of Echo in Pastoral, Epic, and the Jonsonian Masque*, Yale Studies in English, no. 192 (New Haven, 1984), 78–84. The influence of Lyly on Jonson is also discussed in the final chapter of G. K. Hunter, *John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).
  26. For the duello as an “act,” see Jonson, *Cynthia’s Revels*, 4.5.96, 5.2.11, 5.4.66 (and see the marginal gloss to 5.3.29ff., as well as the allusion both to dueling and theatrical performance in the recurrent reference to courtly “play”).
  27. See D. J. Gordon, “Poet and Architect: The Intellectual Setting of the Quarrel Between Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones,” in *The Renaissance Imagination*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Berkeley, 1975), 77–101; and my *Responsive Readings*, 93–95 and 128–29.
  28. Jonson’s first use of the figure of the “soul” for the poetic core of a masque may be found in the preface to *Hymenaei* (1606), line 7; a few lines later he argues the detachment of that soul from occasional constraints. On these principles of masque poetics, see Stephen Orgel, *The Jonsonian Masque* (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), particularly pp. 61–67, as well as the works by Gordon and myself cited above.
  29. Cited from *Wits Recreations* (1640), though the epigram is surely of a substantially earlier date, in Herford and Simpson, *Works*, 9:13.
  30. On traditions of “high culture” bearing on the publication of the Folio, see Richard C. Newton’s provocative piece on “Jonson and the (Re-)Invention of the Book,” in *Classic and Cavalier: Essays on Jonson and the Sons of Ben*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Pittsburgh, 1982), 31–55.
  31. The ideology of the antique text in the Renaissance has surely been the master topic of Renaissance cultural history: Eisenstein assesses the status of the *printed* classic in *Printing Press*, 181–225; an account that addresses the *limits* of that aura which surrounded the antique text may be found in the first chapter of E. J. Kenney, *The Classical Text: Aspects of Editing in the Age of the Printed Book* (Berkeley, 1974), 1–20. Thomas M. Greene gives an account of the historiographic intentions of Renaissance literary imitations, an account that substantially illuminates what I have described as the ideological modeling of the antique text, in *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven, 1982), particularly in his third chapter, “Imitation and Anachronism,” 28–53.

32. For an extended discussion of Jonson's unnerved confrontation of "market iterabilities," see my essay, "The Jonsonian Corpulence; or, The Poet as Mouthpiece," forthcoming in *ELH*.
33. See Franklin B. Williams, Jr., *Index of Dedications and Commendatory Verses in English Books Before 1641* (London, 1962), particularly p. 10. Jonson first dedicated a play text, of *Volpone*, in 1607, the dedicatees being "The Two Most Noble and Most Equall Sisters, The Two Famous Universities." Jonson was preceded here only by Marston, whose earlier choices of dedicatees are as striking as Jonson's here; in 1602, he dedicated *Antonio and Mellida* to "Nobody" and, in 1604, he dedicated *The Malcontent* to Jonson himself. One hardly knows what to make of this latter gesture, characteristically eccentric for Marston; it should probably be taken as his public declaration that hostilities had ended between himself and his archenemy during the War of the Theaters.

Chapman adjusted this procedure by initiating the crucial practice of dedicating plays to actual or potential *patrons*; in 1608, he dedicated *Byron's Tragedy* to Thomas Walsingham. (The dedication of *All Fools* [1605] to Walsingham is spurious, a forgery contrived by J. P. Collier for the 1825 *Dodsley's* edition of the play.) Jonson immediately followed suit with his dedication of *The Masque of Queenes* (published 1609) to Prince Henry, then *Catiline* (published 1611) to the earl of Pembroke and *The Alchemist* (published 1612) to Mary Wroth.

The dedication of plays may be imitated from Italian practice, where it was not uncommon; either Marston, Jonson, or Chapman might have been influenced by such procedures.

## **The Sovereign, the Theater, and the Kingdome of Darknesse: Hobbes and the Spectacle of Power**

RECENT ASSESSMENTS of Renaissance political force suggest an intimate connection between theater and the powers of visibility. In "Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and Its Subversion," Stephen Greenblatt characterizes the monarch as a distinctly spectacular authority sustained by the distancing structure of the theater. By contrast with eighteenth-century power, which "dreams of a panopticon in which the most intimate secrets are open to the view of an invisible authority," "Elizabethan power," Greenblatt says, "depends upon its privileged visibility":

As in a theater, the audience must be powerfully engaged by this visible presence, while at the same time held at a certain respectful distance from it. "We princes," Elizabeth told a deputation of Lords and Commons in 1586, "are set on stages in the sight and view of all the world."<sup>1</sup>

Greenblatt's observation is confirmed by Thomas Hobbes and other political philosophers of the age of monarchy who insist that the state relies upon a manifest "visible power" to "keep the subjects in awe."<sup>2</sup> But his description also suggestively opens up the contradictions inherent in the concept of a spectacular power. Greenblatt implies that the distribution of power is maintained not so much by the visibility of the regal presence per se, as by the theatrical boundary which assures that the subject invests the sovereign presence with its authority at one remove. We may wonder, though, why the theatrical structure which preserves respectful distance doesn't reduce the sovereign to the object of the spectator's unseen and masterfully panoptic gaze. Indeed, when Elizabeth says "we princes are set on stages in the sight and view of the world," she anticipates James's warning to his son that kings are placed on a stage "where all the beholder's eyes are attentively bent to look and pry into the least circumstances of their secretest drifts."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Elizabethan accounts equally suggest that the sovereign's completely visible presence had a secretive and scrutinizing power of its own. Shakespeare's Richard seems to fulfill the "dream of panopticon in which the most intimate secrets are open to view" when, standing on the upper stage, he likens himself to the risen sun capable of "dart[ing] his light into every guilty

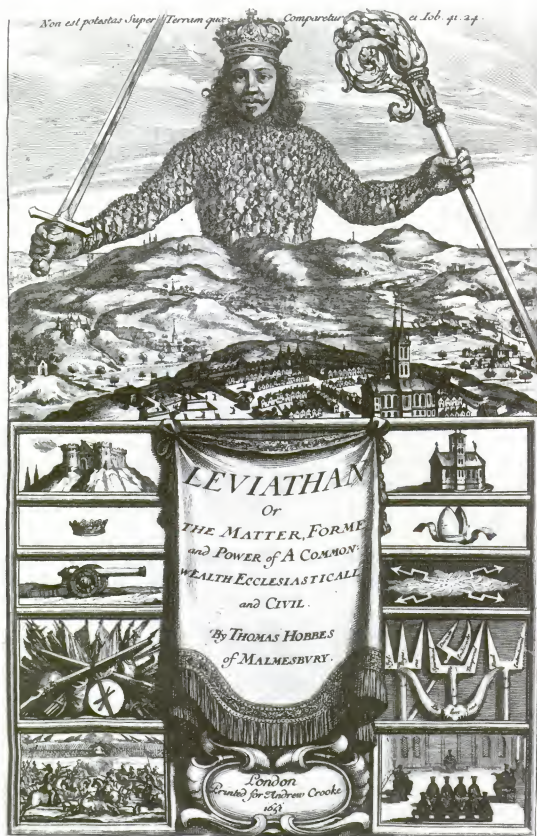


FIGURE 1. Frontispiece, *Leviathan* (London, 1651). Rare Book Collection, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, N.Y.

hole" (III.ii.43). By focusing particularly on Hobbes's analysis, and imaging, of the king's profoundly theatrical presence, I would like to suggest that the vulnerability and the terrifying power of the king's visible presence are, in fact inseparable—that the subject's desire to reduce the sovereign presence to the fully exposed object of his sight lends the regal eye its penetrating, and impenetrable, power.

By invoking Hobbes in the context of pre-Revolutionary display of sovereign power, I court accusations of eliding a significant shift in the concept of political representation—indeed, a shift which theorists have claimed marks the advent of modern political thought. Hanna Pitkin suggests that, with Hobbes, the legal and philosophical belief that the sovereign's person "embodies" the collective in a hypostasized and quasi-mystical form is decisively supplanted by a contractual theory in which the monarch—even the absolute monarch—is conceived as the designated representative of the subjects' will.<sup>4</sup> One might argue that the turn from mimesis to mediation corresponds to a specific occasion in the history of representation—the decline of theater. Writing after the theater had lost its immediate ideological hold on the populace, Hobbes shifts theatricality from an instrument of affective enforcement to a vehicle for abstractly conceptualizing the authorization of power, and, in the process, alters the political subject from the role of spectator and witness to the role of author.

At a crucial point, however, Hobbes's account of the theatrical origins of sovereignty converges with the affective tradition from which it seems to depart. Furthermore, the ongoing and fundamental relationship between theatricality and power in the Renaissance becomes visible at the intersection of these two traditions, where the subject's role is potentially undecidable. On the one hand, bringing Hobbes's description of the contractual beginnings of sovereign and state to bear on Elizabethan evocations of the monarch's presence helps reveal that the regal spectacle had always derived its ideological force from its reflexivity; the very instability of the king's "manifest" presence, its ability to make the viewer the author of its transforming effects, served to renew the subject's desire to affirm the theatrical boundary which holds him at a remove from the mysterious origins of power. On the other hand, in Hobbes's own analysis, the king's visible presence becomes capable of inspiring terror and awe at the moment the ordered theatrical exchange between subject and sovereign breaks down and the contrived figure of "Artificial Man" exceeds the power of those who author it. Traced to this ambiguous moment where the subject becomes the awed spectator to his own creation, Hobbes's theory of political origins suggests that throughout the Renaissance sovereign power arose out of the exorbitancy of the theatrical itself; for an affective and "organic" theorist such as Edward Forsett, as well as for Hobbes the proto-modernist, sovereignty is an irreducibly theatrical phenomenon. Dwelling on this uncertain theatrical and historical threshold will

also suggest how intimately the theory of sovereign power is bound up with a darker Renaissance preoccupation—the daemonic.

## I

In Hobbes, the concept of sovereign authority arises because of the need for a “visible power” to bind the subjects to “the common Benefit.” The second part of *Leviathan*, “Of Common-wealth,” begins:

The finall Cause, End, or Designe of men (who naturally love Liberty, and Dominion over others,) in the introduction of that restraint upon themselves, (in which we see them live in Common-wealths,) is the foresight of their own preservation, and of a more contented life thereby; that is to say, of getting themselves out from the miserable condition of Warre, which is necessarily consequent . . . to the naturall Passions of men, when there is no visible Power to keep them in awe, and tye them by fear of punishment to the performance of their covenants, and observation of [the] Lawes of Nature. (223)

The “terror of some Power” is necessary because neither the “Lawes of Nature” nor the words of any covenant are sufficiently strong to resist the force of “natural Passions”:

For the Lawes of Nature (as *Justice, Equity, Modesty, Mercy*, and (in summe) *doing unto others, as we would be done to,*) of themselves, without the terror of some Power, to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our naturall Passions, that carry us to Partiality, Pride, Revenge, and the like. And Covenants, without the Sword, are but Words, and of no strength to secure a man at all. (223)

As Hobbes continues in the book, this initial conception of authority as the restraining force of sheer terror yields to a more complex formulation of the sovereign as representative. Hobbes’s opening account of the origins of the commonwealth and the function of power is inadequate because it relies too completely on an unproblematic concept of self-interest. If the introduction of a restraining power originates from self-interest—men’s “foresight for their own preservation”—then men should be capable of restraining themselves without an extrinsic force. Either the dominion of power must intervene arbitrarily and against the will of men from the start, or it need not intervene at all.

Hobbes opens the way for a more sophisticated articulation of sovereign representation by loosening up the category of “self-interest” in this analysis. His explanation of why even a great multitude cannot effectively resist invasion hints that it is the unity, not the terrorizing force, of authority that secures concord:

And be there never so great a Multitude; yet if their actions be directed according to the particular judgements, and particular appetites, they can expect thereby no defence, nor protection, neither against a common enemy, nor against the injuries of one another. For being in opinions concerning the best use and application of their strength, they do not

help, but hinder one another; and reduce their strength by mutuall opposition to nothing: whereby they are easily, not only subdued by a very few who agree together; but also when there is no common enemy, they make war upon each other, for their particular interests. (224–25)

By recasting the problems of “particular appetites” in terms of the disorder of multiplicity, Hobbes anticipates the need for a single representative who might overcome the dangers inherent in self-interest. At the same time, the persistence and displacements of war leave it uncertain whether self-interest really is the cause of contention. We sense that “mutual opposition” erupts into war when “there is no common enemy” because each man relies on opposition to define his “particular interests.” Man’s natural tendency toward opposition is heightened when Hobbes goes on to show why men should require an external power to bind them, while creatures such as bees and ants do not: “Amongst these creatures, the Common good differeth not from the Private; and being by nature enclined to their private, they procure thereby the common benefit. But man, whose joy consisteth in comparing himself with other men, can relish nothing but what is eminent” (226). Though Hobbes claims that the “common good differeth not from the Private” in these animals, the real distinction between creatures and men seems to be that while bees are “by nature enclined to their private” and “procure thereby the common benefit,” man has no private impulse beyond the purely social desire to define himself in relation to what is conspicuous and “eminent.”

When Hobbes returns to formulate the origins of the commonwealth, the figure of sovereign authority whose “visible Power” serves to keep self-interest in check equally provides a unified “Person” and coherent will which would be otherwise lacking. The commonwealth is generated when the multitude decide

... to appoint one man, or Assembly of men, to beare their Person; and every one to owne, and acknowledge himself to be Author of whatsoever he that so beareth their Person, shall Act, or cause to be Acted, in those things which concern the Common Peace and Saftie; and therein to submit their Wills, every one to his Will, and their Judgements, to his Judgement. This is more than Consent, or Concord; it is a real Unity of them all, in one and the same Person, made by Covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if every man should say to every man, *I Authorise and give up my Right of Governing my selfe, to this Man, or this Assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy Right to him, and Authorise all his Actions in like manner.* This done, the Multitude so united in one Person, is called a COMMON-WEALTH, in latine CIVITAS. This is the generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather (to speak more reverently) of that *Mortall God*, to which we owe under the *Immortall God*, our peace and defence. For by this Authoritie, given him by every particular man in the Common-Wealth, he hath the use of so much Power and Strength conferred on him, that by terror thereof, he is inabled to forme the wills of them all, to Peace at home, and mutuall ayd against their enemies abroad. (227–28)



Hobbes's insistence that "this is more than Consent, or Concord; it is a real Unity of them all, in one and the same Person" confirms Ernst Kantorowicz's observation that in Renaissance theories of sovereignty the king's artificial, metaphoric Body Politic was seen to represent his most authentic presence.<sup>5</sup> In Hobbes, the real and determining authority of the collective figure of the commonwealth arises through a conflation of questions of representation and force. The strength of the commonwealth depends on its ability to represent the multiplicity of its participants in "one Will": "The only way to erect such a common power" is for all men "to conferre all their power and strength upon one Man, or Assembly of men, to beare their Person." The force of the ruler's "Person" derives not so much from the "Power and Strength" conferred on him, as from his ability to represent the plural power of the state in an integral form. At the same time, Hobbes doesn't abandon his earlier insistence on the terrorizing power of the Sovereign Person; he conflates it with the sovereign's representational effectiveness: "by this Authoritie, given him by every particular man in the Commonwealth, he hath the use of so much Power and Strength conferred on him, that by terror thereof, he is enabled to forme the wills of them all." The "terror" of the sovereign's accumulated "power and strength," which seems to be conferred upon him by the act of authorization itself, now doesn't restrain or oppose the subjects' desires, but actually "formes" their "wills." Hobbes's conception of the sovereign representative allows him to resolve the problem of self-interest by conceiving a terrifying presence which at once restrains and crystallizes the individual will.

When Hobbes goes on to describe the sovereign's binding power, he preserves self-interest as the founding principle of the state. But it governs at two distinct levels now, determining the subject's relation to the monarch who represents him, and the monarch's relation to himself as an independent figure. Because the subject is the author of the sovereign's actions, he can never legally, or even logically, assert himself in opposition to the ruler.

If he that attempteth to oppose his sovereign be killed or punished by him for such an attempt, he is the author of his own punishment, as being by the Institution, Author of all his Sovereign shall do: And because it is injustice for a man to do anything, for which he may be punished by his own authority, he is also upon that title, unjust. (323–30)

The sovereign cannot be seen to defy his subject because he is merely a representation of the subject's own will. Though Hobbes generally asserts that the commonwealth is ideally represented by a single ruling figure, here, when he is concerned to assert the illogic of resistance in terms of identity between subject and sovereign, he proves his point by invoking a governing assembly. Hobbes disallows the notion that sovereign authority could be conditional by showing that

... when an assembly of men is made Sovereign; then no man imagineth any such covenant to have past in the Institution; for no man is so dull as to say, for example, the People of *Rome*, made a Covenant with the Romans, to hold the Sovereignty on such or such conditions; which not performed, the Romans might lawfully depose the Roman People. (231)

According to this logic, the ideal and irrefutable form of authority would be a governing body as multiple as the subjects it represents.

At the same time, the principle of self-interest equally shows why a single sovereign is the most adequate representative. Hobbes can't, of course, establish the sovereign's legal prestige simply in terms of his mirroring of the subject because the movement of authorization could then be easily reversed; the traitor cannot claim he was performing the will of the sovereign. But as well as reproducing the desire of each individual in the commonwealth, the Sovereign Person acts according to his own singular will, which is intrinsically more powerful than the multiple and divided impulses of the people or of a representative assembly: "The Resolutions of a monarch are subject to no other Inconstancy, than that of Humane Nature; but in Assemblies, besides that of nature, there ariseth an Inconstancy of Number" (242). Furthermore, the "Inconstancy" of "Human Nature" has an absolute limit: "a Monarch cannot disagree with himself, out of envy, or interest; but an Assembly may; and that to such a height, as may produce a Civill Warre"(243).

Invoked doubly, then, the law against self-contradiction serves to preserve a permanent asymmetry of power in the state. On the one hand, it determines the sovereign's preeminence as a freely acting and self-determining agent. On the other, it shows why the subject, as the author of this agent, can never oppose his will. The imbalance can be sustained only by virtue of a concept of self-identity which is flexible enough to allow for a perfectly independent representative who is simultaneously a mirroring representation of the subject's desires. In a crucial transitional passage at the end of the treatise's first section, "Of Man," and before its second, "Of Common-wealth," Hobbes establishes the grounds for his theory of political authority by defining individual identity in terms of a concept of the "Person" derived from theater:

*A person*, is he whose words or actions are considered, either as his own, or as representing the words or actions of an other man, or of any other things to whom they are attributed, whether Truly or by Fiction.

When they are considered as his owne, then is he called a *Naturall Person*: And when they are considered as representing the words and actions of an other, then he is a *Feigned* or *Artificial person*. The word Person is latine: Instead where of the Greeks have *πρῶτον*, which signifies the *Face*, as *Persona* in latine signifies the *disguise*, or *outward appearance* of a man, counterfeited on the Stage; and sometimes more particularly that part of it, which disguiseth the face, as a Mask or Visard: And from the Stage, hath been translated to any Representer of speech and action, as well in Tribunalls, as Theaters. So

that a *Person*, is the same that an *Actor* is, both on the stage and in common Conversation; and to *Personate*, is to *Act*, or *Represent* himself, or an other; and he that acteth another, is said to beare his *Person*, or act in his name. (217)

The “Feigned person” of the sovereign is capable of fully embodying any individual in the state because each individual is already a self-impersonator in a sense—a masked and mediated representation of himself. While preserving agency, Hobbes’s conception of the inherent theatricality of the self allows for a “Feigned” and vicarious political representation which doesn’t in itself violate the nature of the subject’s “person.” Furthermore, when Hobbes elaborates the theatrical metaphor in terms of the distinction between actor and author, he shows that even agency is a contingent phenomenon dictated by the laws of property, not nature:

Of Persons Artificiall, some have their words and actions *Owned* by those whom they represent. And then the Person is the *Actor*; and he that owneth his words and actions is the *AUTHOR*: In which case the Actor acteth by Authority. For that which in speaking of goods and possessions, is called an *Owner*, an in latine *Dominus*, in Greeke κύριος; speaking of Actions, is called Author. And as the Right of possession, is called Dominion; so the Right of doing any Action, is called *AUTHORITY*. So that by Authority, is always understood a Right of doing any act: and *done by Authority*, done by Commission, or License from him whose right it is. (218)

Hobbes manages a transition from “authorship” to “authorization,” from fictional to legal representation, through the two terms’ common derivation from ownership. The author possesses his words and actions, not inalienably, but as an owner possesses a potentially transferable commodity. Yet the actor who speaks and acts for the author does not become the owner; rather, he receives from the author the right to act. The shift occurs because Hobbes alters the terms of the analogy he uses to explain the connection between authoring and authority. Once Hobbes has shown that as an owner possesses his goods, so an author possesses his actions, we expect he will continue the analogy by saying that as the right of possessing goods is called dominion, so the right of possessing an action is called authority. Instead, he shifts from a distinction between possessing goods and possessing words and actions to a distinction between possession and action: “And as the Right of possession, is called Dominion; so the Right of doing any Action, is called *AUTHORITY*.” While the author remains the owner and maintains the right of possession, in having the actor speak and act for him, he gives over the right of “doing any act.”

The virtue of conceiving a theory of political representation in terms of theatrical representation particularly is that it allows Hobbes to transfer agency: while insofar as he is a representation of himself the author merely owns his words, because he is an actor the representative can be seen to have been conferred with the right to act. In this sense, by making himself the author of the

representative's words and actions, the contracting individual also makes himself subject to the actor's words and actions: "From hence it followeth, that when an actor maketh Covenant by Authority, he bindeth thereby the Author, no less than if he had made it himself; and no less subjecteth him to all the consequences of the same" (218). The author doesn't just make a covenant through his representative; he gives the actor license to make a covenant which binds him as if he had made it himself.

By theatricalizing identity and conceiving of the subject's words and actions as forms of transferable property, Hobbes is able to allow a play of identity and difference in the relationship between the subject and his representative; the sovereign can be seen to embody the subject's will, but as a discrete agent. But in thus loosening the boundaries of the self, and representing agency in terms of ownership, Hobbes makes the origin of the commonwealth all the more problematic. While his theory of political representation relies on the notion of the author as the owner of his words and actions, Hobbes's fundamental justification for the commonwealth arises from the fact that there is no concept of property before the intervention of a sovereign power:

*Justice is the constant Will of giving to every man his own. And therefore, where there is no Own, that is, no Propriety, there is no Injustice; and where there is no coercive power erected, that is where there is no Commonwealth, there is no Propriety; all men having right to all things: Therefore, where there is no Common-wealth, there nothing is unjust. So that the nature of Justice, consisteth in keeping of valid Covenants; but the validity of Covenants begins not but with the Constitution of a Civil Power, sufficient to compel men to keep them: And then it is also that Propriety begins. (202–203)*

Though by expanding the concept of property to a definition of the individual's words and actions Hobbes is able to suggest that the sovereign representative truly embodies the will of the subject, he equally runs the risk of undermining the entire logic of the exchange by opening the possibility that there is no authorship before the covenant is instituted. The paradoxical and asymmetrical exchange which Hobbes articulates by drawing together representation and power would assume a more radical character. Rather than being compelled to acknowledge that he was the author of "whatsoever he that . . . beareth his Person" acts, the subject would have to accept that the sovereign figure whom he authorizes constitutes him as the author for the first time. The sovereign wouldn't just assume the power to "forme the wills" of his subjects as the result of a voluntary contract between men. In a more baffling exchange which erodes the distinction between the origin and the effects of power, the representative must be seen to form the will which institutes him.

Hobbes does, in fact, imagine the prospect of a representational exchange in which origin and agency are confounded, and he imagines it as a specifically

theatrical event. Discussing the causes of madness, Hobbes cites an ancient instance of mass possession:

There was once a great conflux of people in *Abdera*, a city of the Greeks, at the acting of the Tragedy of *Andromeda*, upon an extreme hot day: whereupon, a great many of the spectators falling into fevers, had this accident from the heat, and from the tragedy together, that they did nothing but pronounce the Iambiques, with the names of *Perseus* and *Andromeda*; which together with the Fever, was cured only by the coming of winter: And this madness was thought to proceed from the Passion imprinted by the Tragedy. (142)

The anecdote is significant, for it represents a moment of irresolution in Hobbes's own account of the origins of madness. He has just remarked that the ancients were divided in their beliefs about madness, some attributing it to daemonic possession, others rightly recognizing that it derives from the passions, and when he goes on after this first example to describe other classical accounts of madness, he clearly separates out instances of true and false interpretation. But he reserves judgment on the case of theatrical possession, presumably because the cause of madness in this case remains undecidable; the spectators who involuntarily "pronounce Iambiques, with the names of *Perseus* and *Andromeda*," are "imprinted" or possessed by a material representation of the human passions. This more radically transferenceal conception of theatrical force may hint that the sovereign representative's real power arises, not from a controlled, economic exchange between author and actor, but from a bewildering confrontation between spectators and a spectacle which, by simply mirroring their desires, assumes the "visible Power" to "forme their wills."

Hobbes describes just this sort of fantasmally indeterminate representation as the affective grounds for one dark form of political mastery. Hobbes most thoroughly articulates the juncture between the perceptual psychology of the subject and the origins of the state in his discussion of the daemonic underpinnings of heathen governance. Whether they perceived apparitions as material or ethereal forms, all pagan daemonologists, Hobbes tells us, mistook inward for outward forms

... as if the Dead of whom they Dreamed, were not inhabitants of their own Brain, but of the Air, or of Heaven, or Hell; not Phantasms, but Ghosts; with just as much reason, as if one should say, he saw his Ghost in a Looking-Glass, or the Ghosts of the Stars in a River; or call the ordinary apparition of the Sun, of the quantity of about a foot, the *Daemon*, or Ghost of that great Sun that enlighteneth the whole visible world: And by that means have feared them, as things of an unknown, that is, of an unlimited power to do them good or harm; and consequently, given occasion to the Governours of the Heathen Commonwealths to regulate this their fear, by establishing that *DAEMONOLGY* ... to the Publique Peace, and to the Obedience of Subjects necessary thereunto. (658–59)

Though the pagan's manipulable terror is "of an unknown, that is, of an unlimited power," Hobbes goes on to suggest that daemonic dread could precipitate into the worship of material idols (665). The daemonologist's fall into blind idolatry presumably answers to the more terrifying prospect of a force without discernible origin.

Hobbes's account of the daemonic and its political function is significant because it brings to light the potent ambiguity at the heart of his own conception of the origins of perception and subjectivity. To explain the causes of the daemonic error, Hobbes reiterates his opening description of the mediated structure of sensory perception. All sense of outward forms, he says in the opening pages of *Leviathan*, arises neither directly from the external object itself, nor even from the "divers motions" exerted by the object on the senses, but from the "resistance or counter-pressure, or endeavour of the heart, to deliver itself" of these impinging pressures (85). "Sense," he claimed in the first chapter, "in all cases, is nothing else but originall fancy," "which Imagination," he continues now, "is called *Sight*; and seemeth not to be mere Imagination, but the Body itself without us" (85, 657). Imagination proper, Hobbes reminds us, derives from the residual effects of these inward motions; "and the motion made by this pressure, continuing after the object is removed, is that we call *Imagination* and *Memory*" (658). Daemonic dread arose because the pagans mistook these lingering and inward apparitions for objects truly outside them:

This nature of *Sight* having never been discovered by the ancient pretenders to Naturall Knowledge; much less by those that consider not things so remote (as that knowledge is) from their present use; it was hard for men to conceive of those Images in the Fancy, and in the Sense, otherwise than of things really without us. Which some (because they vanish away, they know not whither, nor how) will have to be absolutely Incorporeal. (658)

Hobbes's attempt to unravel the causes of daemonic confusion brings into question the philosopher's own distinction between the original "Imagination" which produces the sense of an external form and secondary, properly interior, "Imagination." The pagan takes an inward for an outward form. But to perceive this apparition as a ghost, not simply as an object, he must also be aware that it is without external ground or referent. The disappearance of the prompting object and the lingering of the apparition cannot in themselves account for this effect, for the object itself is only known by virtue of the inward motions of the heart. In his initial description of inward imagination, Hobbes suggests that the lingering motions are intrinsically distinguishable because they are in a state of decay: "*IMAGINATION* . . . is nothing but decaying sense" (88). But as the central tenet of Hobbesian mechanics holds that "when a Body is once in motion, it

moveth (unless something else hinder it) eternally," this "decaying" must actually be seen as an eclipsing:

The decay of Sense in men waking, is not the decay of the motion made in sense; but an obscuring of it, in such manner, as the light of the Sun obscureth the light of the Starres; which starres do no less exercise their vertue by which they are visible, in the day, than in the night. But because amongst many stroaks, which our eyes, ears, and other organs receive from externall bodies, the predominant one is sensible; therefore the light of the sun being predominant, we are not affected with the light of the starres. (88)

While the sense of an external form is produced solely by the outward motion of the heart as it excludes encroaching movements, the illusion of inwardness arises because the motions from without have the power to suppress and occlude these initial impressions.

Hobbes's contradictory doubling over the founding moment opens the truly fantasmic possibility that the exclusion which prompts the impression of outward forms is radically inseparable from the suppressing motion which produces the illusion of inwardness. In the gesture of casting out the apparition, Hobbes's daemonologist would conjure the "ghost" as an irresolvably outward and imaginary presence. In this sense, the pagan feels dread of an unknown and unlimited power, not because he fails to perceive that the apparitions originate from him, but because he recognizes that the lingering and originless fantasms do indeed reflect him. The figure who says "he saw his own Ghost in a Looking-Glass" takes a secondary reflection for an independent form with a life of its own. But he feels terror because he sees it specifically as "his own Ghost," as an alien presence which derives from him and mirrors his own ghostliness.

The thorough implication of the Hobbesian mechanism of perception in the ghostly indeterminacy of the visible world suggests why the apparition which derives from the daemonologist himself retains the power to haunt him as though he were "possessed by the devil" (660). Because the daemonic presence is itself merely the lingering sign of the exclusion which constitutes him as a subject, the pagan cannot expel it without repeating an original self-division and dispossession; precisely in his effort to comprehend it objectively, the subject revives the fantasm as an inappropriately marginal form. The fantasm remains perpetually unmasterable, then, because it is an effect, not an object, of the act of perception which would make it signifiable. When, echoing his account of the contagious effects of the spectacle at Abdera, Hobbes remarks that "the Graecians, by their Colonies and Conquests, communicated their Language and Writings into Asia, Egypt, and Italy; and therein by necessary consequence their *Daemonology*" (659), and claims that "by that means, the contagion was derived also to the Jewes," we sense that for the philosopher the daemonic is truly insidious because it can't be

separated from the representations which convey it—from the fabric of discourse itself—and therefore can't be grasped as a belief at all.<sup>6</sup>

Though Hobbes would bracket and contain the daemonic, casting it out into the "Kingdome of Darknesse" and the tyrannical mystification of pagan governance, we should recognize that Hobbes's godly sovereign is as much a threshold figure as the pagan's ghost. According to Hobbesian political theory, the sovereign is at once a representation of the subject—a representative who simply mirrors and mediates between contracting citizens—and, at the same time, an independent figure whose imposed force alone can tie men to their contracts. Furthermore, the indeterminacy of the sovereign's role is itself a source of his authority. The subject, Hobbes insists, cannot oppose the king's fatal will because he is the author of it. Hobbes's account of the daemonic suggests that the traitor's bind may expose the contradictory origins of sovereign force, not just the juridical authority of an already constituted power, and may exemplify the condition of every subject within the political state. Reading monarchic power in light of the daemonic suggests that it is the subject's very resistance to the fatally opposing force which first brings forth the sovereign presence as a representation of his own desires.

Conceiving the sovereign as a daemonic presence does not resolve the problem of political origins in Hobbes—it makes it the basis of the monarch's undeniable force. As a daemonic moment, the beginnings of the commonwealth become irresolvably circular: the terror which enables the sovereign to "forme the will" of the subject is the terror the subject experiences knowing he has authored this form. In a sense, the subject's fear would be quite literally groundless. But the subject's awareness of the groundlessness of his response may be reason enough for genuine terror and idolatrous awe.

## II

The dazzling amplitude of the sovereign's visible presence might belie any connection between the experience of seeing monarchs and seeing ghosts. But Hobbes includes the sun itself—the source of all visibility—among those ghostly forms which prompt fear of "an unknown, that is, of an unlimited power," and his description of the regal presence suggests that the structural contradictions of the sovereign's political and theatrical role crystallize in the profound ambiguities of his visibility. Or, reading this association between the affective and structural function of the theatrical the other way around, we might say that Hobbes's social contract theory emerges out of a contradiction which had always been inherent in the sovereign's manifest presence and which had always been the source of his power. Hobbes's daemonologist enables us to cross over the Revolutionary boundary between Elizabethan and "modernist" political theory,



and even suggests that the uncertainty of this threshold was at the heart of the sovereign's persistent and uncanny force all along.

When Hobbes asserts that the state requires a "visible Power to keep [the subjects] in awe, and tie them by fear of punishment to the performance of their covenants," he seems to invoke visibility simply as the means to make the sovereign's distinct and superior force obvious to the subject. The king's power must be visible in order to enlist the subject's natural tendency to "relish nothing but what is eminent" and to compare his force against the manifest force of others. At the same time, for Hobbes, the king's visibility figures him as the origin of the subject's own power. Speaking of the sovereign as the "fountain of Honour," Hobbes remarks:

As in the presence of the Master, the Servants are equall, and without any honor at all; so are the Subjects in the presence of the Sovereign. And though they shine some more, some lesse, when they are out of his sight; yet in his presence, they shine no more than the Starres in presence of the Sun. (238)

Because the sovereign is not just a greater power but the source of the subject's power, his presence obliterates all differences between men and effaces the presence of each subject entirely. The king's visible presence draws upon the subject's desire to compare himself to others, but it also has the power to thwart all measurable distinctions.

We can glimpse daemonic possibilities in the regal presence if we imagine these two contradictory forms of visible power converge in the sovereign spectacle—if we imagine that the sovereign appears before the subject inseparably as the presence he defines himself against and the origin of his powers. Although Hobbes suggests that the regal sun is itself the manifest source of the subject's power, we should notice how closely its obliterating force reiterates the sensory origin of inwardness and subjectivity, where motion occludes motion "as the light of the Sun obscureth the light of the Starres." The echo darkly hints that the sun itself, the absolute embodiment of amplitude and presence, cannot be separated from its eclipsing effects. Manifesting origins as the effacement of origins, the visible sovereign may be as dazzlingly inconceivable as the pagan's ghostly sun.

Paradoxically, we can best understand the potency and the heritage of Hobbes's manifest sovereign by taking into account Renaissance theorists' ongoing insistence on the limitations of visibility. Although Hobbes suggests that the king's visible presence has the power to awe and overwhelm, he also says that a monarch is preferable to a ruling assembly because a king can make political judgments "with as much secrecy as he will" (242). The discrepancy runs through a number of Renaissance texts on kingship, and in Edward Forsett's *Comparative Discourse of the Bodies Natural and Politique* (1606) takes the form of contradictory appeals to the viewing subject. Forsett claims that "seeing that both God and the Soule, working so unlimitably, be yet undiscerned, in their essence, as hidden and con-

cealed from the eyes of men, it may seem to stand more with majesty, and to work more regarding, more admiring, and more adoring if their presence be more sparing and lesse familiarly vouchsafed" and warns against "this odious injury of the subjects overmuch enquiring and spying into their sovereign."<sup>7</sup> At the same time, he invokes just this "spying" into the soul as the means for the reader to recognize the sovereign's infinite sublimity:

Admit that the brayne were so layed open to our aspects, that we might attentively behold the substance, the shape, the very life and actions thereof; would not the consideration of the dignitie of the soule, there resiant and working, worke an impression in our thoughts, to regard, esteeme and admire those parts, as excelling and surpassing all the rest, so when the person of the Prince is looked upon (whereon we doe seldom gaze enough) our inward cogitations filled with a reverence of the regal majestie seated in that flesh . . . ought to surmount all sensual conceits (scant thinking of any humane nature) but making an infinite difference between that body, so (as it were) glorified with the presence, representation, and in dwelling of that supreme or exalted eminence, and other ordinary persons.(33)

Here the prospect of the "heart or brayne . . . layed open to our aspects" has the power to "scant thinking of any humane nature" and "worke an impression" directly on the beholder's thoughts. The hint of an unmediated, even transgressive, force suggests that the fantasy of viewing the soul's innermost workings redounds to the sovereign's grandeur when the subject's prying scrutiny is imagined as a specifically reflexive act. Thought isn't overwhelmed and thwarted simply by the sight of the spirit made visible; what "scant[s] thinking of any humane nature" is the possibility of the "brayne" seeing itself fully "layed open" to view as an outward and manifest spectacle. Thought exceeds itself through its fantasy of absolute visibility; Forsett annuls his own "conceit" of a visible soul when he imagines it as a spectacle which makes "inward cogitations . . . surmount all sensuous conceits." The spectator is made aware, not just of the relative and measurable distinction, but of the "infinite difference" between himself and the sovereign by a spectacle which, even as he conceives it, subverts his human power to comprehend.

The reflexive and self-divided nature of speculating on sovereignty is borne out by the intimate connection in Forsett between the subject's bedazzled failure to comprehend and the spectacle's magical—or perhaps daemonic—power to transform him. "The resplendence and power of sovereignty in the royall person of a Sovereign . . . shows itself" in two ways: "both in so great a majestie, as dazleth the eyes of all beholders, and in so admirable effects, as to transform savagenesse into civility, repugnance into concords, vices into virtues, procuring love, yet implying fear" (34). The monarch's power can be seen both in its own, manifest majesty, and in its effects on those who behold it. But the sovereign presence is truly supernatural, we sense, because it effaces the distinction between these two

measures of his eminence, between the form and the effects of power. Because his objective presence is incomprehensible, it can only be seen in the dazzled and blinded eyes of its viewers. At the same time, the sovereign's majesty seems to "show itself" in its effects literally and materially, reproducing itself like an ideal contagion in the subjects who watch. Forsett similarly implied the link between our inability to grasp the spectacle of power and its transferential effects when he called on us to gaze on a regal presence which, though it "surmounts all sensual conceits" and "scant[s] thinking of any humane nature," nevertheless "worke[s] an impression in our thoughts" directly, as though with the unmediated force of the spectacle at Abdera, which "imprints" itself in its unwitting audience. The hint of a daemonic loss of distinction between the object of perception and its transforming or possessing effects suggests that the spectacle's force is in fact prompted by the beholder's efforts to comprehend it; precisely in his attempt to make the sovereign presence the fully separate and fully visible object of his sight, the subject divides and displaces himself, and so renews the spectacle's transgressive force.

Like Hobbes's daemons then, the sovereign presence may assume an irresistible power to mark and transform its viewers because it is an effect of the act of perception itself. With the king, this paradox is particularly disquieting because it bears on the eye—the guarantor of the subject's own sovereign and untainted presence. In Shakespeare's *Henry V*, the king announces the moment when he will reveal his full splendor for the first time:

I will rise there with so full a glory  
That I will dazzle all the eyes of France  
Yea, strike the Dauphin blind to look on us.  
(I.ii.278–80)

The conquered subject will be blinded by the sight of the regal sun. Yet Henry's ambiguous words equally suggest that the sovereign must strike the subject blind in order that he may look on him, that the subject's blindness alone enables him to see the king. The blindness with which the king strikes the spectator informs and possesses the subject's sight as an alien and integral condition; like the strangely haunted "flies at Bartholomew-tide" evoked by Burgundy at the end of *Henry V* to describe the French princess's willingness to submit despite herself, all of the sovereign's subjects are "blind though they have their eyes" (V.ii.326).

The sovereign doesn't simply blind; he divides the subject from and dispossesses him of his sight. The regal spectacle's power to implicate the viewer's gaze in its blinding effects suggests why the visible presence which the subject cannot disclose takes on a panoptic authority of its own. The act of seeing enters into Hobbes's metaphorical and metaphysical elaboration of the regal sun as the origin

of the subject's power and prestige. Paradoxically, though, it is the sovereign, figured both as the most visible of forms and the source of light, who exercises his eclipsing power through his eye; the subjects are only able to shine "some more, some less," not just when they are out of the sovereign's presence, but "when they are out of his sight." The presence which enables the spectator to see, the regal sun equally seems to become the agent of sight in the visual exchange. The conception of the monarch as a seeing sun was a commonplace, and is perhaps less striking judged in terms of the Renaissance theory of sight beams—the theory that the eye is the agent that illuminates what it perceives. Nevertheless, this optical construct bears specifically on the political and hierarchic relationship between the subject and the spectacle of sovereignty, and we can understand the binding nature of the awe and terror the subject feels before the sovereign form by recognizing the way the spectacle engages the spectator in a reversal between sight and the visible.

Though Louis Marin invokes the fiction of the seeing sun to describe the controlled and complicitous relationship between the absolute monarch and the royal historian, his analysis of the ideological function of the regal eye equally reveals the sovereign's power to dazzle and subject any who gaze on him:

The historian's glance is closest to the royal Eye. . . . But far from returning the king to the position of an object seen, the historian's position, taken up in the optical beams of the royal eye, is as close as possible to its source. Thus an asymmetrical reciprocity of the eye and the glance, of that glance that sees what the king does, and the eye that enables him to see what he does, because the royal eye has the property of making visible what it sees.<sup>8</sup>

Though power is conveyed entirely through a play of gazes, the exchange between the king and the historian is never circular or symmetrical. For the "object" of the historian's gaze is not simply another eye, but the source and condition of his own power to see. While the unique property of the regal eye enables the king to be represented without loss, it also assures the monarch's power over the subject who would discern him. Marin's description suggests that the king's presence figures forth a moment of absolute vision when the subject's eye reflexively turns about and "lays bare" not just the soul or brain, but the origin of its own sight. Conceived from the point of view of the spectator, the figure of the king's eye as a sun, of a regal sight that brings forth what it sees, would convey the uncanny power of a spectacle which is the source of the gaze which beholds it.

Insofar as it visibly exposes the origin of the subject's sight, the resplendent image of the eye as a sun is equally the terrifying figure of the seeing eye as a mask, of a representation which sees. Jean-Luc Nancy initiates an exploration of the complex optical and pictorial structure of the Cartesian moment of self-cognizance by citing a passage from Marc Richer which draws together the two, contradictory properties of the gaze which, in the political sphere, characterize

the sovereign eye: "Vision comes precisely to the point where it itself sees itself . . . at the very moment it sees two eyes, other, like the visible mask or front of an invisible eye that nevertheless casts hereupon a 'visible' look in that it reverses the vision that prevails here in the visible."<sup>9</sup> The eye sees itself as the visible mask of another eye—an alien and unseeable eye. Yet because this mask is the eye itself, the form in which the eye first sees that it sees, and first comes into its powers, it casts a "visible" look and makes the gaze itself something tangible; reversing vision "here in the visible," it "converts into vision the blindness of substance" and exposes "the surface of light and of the gaze."<sup>10</sup>

Richer's evocation of reflexivity recalls Hobbes's theatricalization of the self, and draws out the possibilities of terror inherent in the philosopher's placidly etymological derivation of the "Person" from the "the *disguise* or *outward appearance* of a man, counterfeited on the Stage; and sometimes more particularly that part of it, which disguiseth the face, as a Mask or Vizard" (217). By reducing the self to a mask of itself, Hobbes allowed for an exchange in which the "Feigned or Artificial Person" of the sovereign assumes all the unity and amplitude of the "Natural Person" he represents. But the "outward appearance" of the sovereign may assume the power to terrify by virtue of its very emptiness. Hobbes's claim that the figure who merely represents the subject supersedes his power suggests that the theatrical transference which institutes the sovereign also institutes the subject—that the subject first comprehends himself figured in the external and irreducibly theatrical person of the "Artificial Man"; the spectator, like the daemonologist, is subjected by the terror he feels before a form which represents his power and agency in a fundamentally alien and derivative form.

To discern the effects of the sovereign's masking eye, we must take up the role of spectators to Hobbes's text, and explore the way the looming, supernatural image of the king which oversees our entry into *Leviathan* catches our eye. The frontispiece of the first edition of the *Leviathan* presents a fantastically enlarged image of the sovereign, rising like the sun over the English landscape, his arms, bearing the royal sword and scepter, extending outward and forward across the scene.<sup>11</sup> The figure represents the king's two bodies graphically, for its body is made up entirely of the multiple and overlapping figures of the body politic. The populace appear like a coat of mail on the king's obscured body, yet, shading into a continuum with the king's face and hands, they equally seem to constitute his body; like the scales of Leviathan in Job, the body politic is at once an integral part of the king's body proper and serves to conceal and protect it: "His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal" (41:15). The power of the image arises, though, because it makes us, the subjects, experience this contradiction of being integral to what we bar in our own activity of viewing.

The engraving figures the sovereign's power entirely in terms of a paradoxical movement of gazes. Each of those subjects who constitute the king's body



FIGURE 2. Frontispiece detail, *Leviathan* (London, 1651).

stands, with his back to the viewer, gazing up at the sovereign's eye, which looks out over them directly into the viewer's eye. The sovereign form, then, represents the viewing subject in a double and contradictory fashion. He mirrors our gaze directly, his ample and singular presence the narcissistic reflection of our own. But the spectator's activity is also represented *en abîme* in the subjects, who make up the king's body and whose collective gaze invests his eye with its singular power. The directness of the figure's gaze seems to assure us that our sight is distinct from the sight of those subjects who make up the king's body, and tempts us to see our own power imaged in the regal form despite the superscription: "Non

est potestas Super Terram quae Comparetur ei Iob 41.24" (There is no power on earth which can be compared to him). But the continuation of the verse in Job suggests that even those who imagine themselves to be on high may fall below the "Artificial Man's" commanding gaze: "Leviathan . . . is made so as not to be afraid. He seeth every high thing below him, and is a king of all the children of pride." The scriptural account also hints that our own forceful vision may play a part in the beast's power to reduce us before his gaze: "Shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?" (41:9).

To understand the sovereign's power to subject our level gaze, we must view him specifically as a "made" form—as a representation of kingship. Our sight can be seen to coincide with the sight of the subjects within the engraving insofar as the image figures the contradiction inherent in the way we view, and determine our seeing presence in terms of, a spectacular eye. We confirm our sight in the mirroring eye of the sovereign. At the same time, like the figures within who gaze obliquely, we discern the king's represented eye as a separate eye, an eye we see but which doesn't see us. By separating the distinct powers of our gaze, by figuring our sight at once as the sight of the narcissist and the onlooker, the spectacular figure enables us to complete a fantasy of absolute visibility, of sight seeing itself seeing. Through our doubled gaze, we are able to see in the eye that looks directly at us, not just a secondary reflection of our eye, but the fully distinct and objective embodiment of our sight. In a sense, we are made the spectators to our own powerful vision. Yet, in thus enabling a fully reflexive vision, the sovereign spectacle subjects the viewer to its own fantasmal gaze. Through the splitting of our sight, we see in the spectacle's mirror, as in the daemonologist's ghostly looking glass, the gaze of an alien eye. Sight sees itself completely, lays itself bare, and therefore sees itself as something completely other than itself—as the blind and implacable eye of spectacle. The sovereign's fantasmal eye "reverses the vision that prevails here in the visible," for it fully embodies the power of sight precisely insofar as it remains an opaque, unseeing object of our gaze. The Leviathan's seeing eye, the locus of his absolute power, is as "close-sealed" as his body: "Who can discover the face of his garment? . . . Who can open the doors of his face? . . . His eyes are like the eyelids of the morning" (41:13,14,18). Just as the entire figure of the Leviathan, rising like the morning sun yet casting a shadow forward across the landscape, has the paradoxical form of the dazzling "ghost of the Great Sun," his eye manifests a seeing presence by remaining as impenetrable to us as a mask. "Privileged visibility" and the invisible, omnipotent sight of the panopticon converge in the penetrating beam of the sovereign's implacable eye.<sup>12</sup>

The mere spectacle of sovereignty subjects because it defies the spectator's power to see it merely as a spectacle. The subject does not simply look upon the regal form, he determines his vision by virtue of it. And he does so according to

a contradictory gesture. The subject actively reduces the sovereign presence to the object of his gaze—to a spectacle—in order to define his own seeing presence against it. In this sense, the king's visible presence is an effect of the power the subject already possesses. At the same time though, this split between spectator and spectacle equally marks the reflexive origin of the subject's sight; to see at all, the subject must see that he sees. The sovereign presence has the power to subvert the gaze because it reveals these two gestures as a single, self-divisive moment of origin. In the king, the subject conjures his seeing presence as the presence he has excluded from sight in order to see.

The subversive potency of the king's purely artificial presence prompts broader speculation about Hobbes's own indeterminate position in the history of Renaissance political theory. The immediate lineage of Hobbes's fantasmal image can be traced to 1642, the fateful year the English parliament articulated its resolve against the king. Kantorowicz charts the reduction of kingship to its artificial, political body through two commemorative medals struck during the course of that year. The earlier depicts, in ascending order, the House of Commons, the House of Lords, and above both but forming a continuous and integral part of the scene, the enthroned sovereign. The later medallion shows the same image, but with the partial figure of the king now cut off from the scene below and iconically framed "like an apparition of the image of the Great Seal, or of its central part."<sup>13</sup> The commensurateness of this depletion of the king not just to an icon of himself, but to the lingering sign of a great sign, with Hobbes's exalting transformation of kingship into a spectacle of spectating suggests that the desires of the philosopher who sought to return sovereignty from its grave may not be entirely distinguishable from the impulses of those who, even before the fact, had willfully turned the king into a legible ghost of himself.

The paradox stretches back further though. For even those Elizabethan philosophers and jurists who wrote before the fall and who conceived monarchy in organic terms sought the king's truth in his thoroughly reduced and derivative presence. "Gregoire," Kantorowicz remarks, "when relegating the 'Majesty of God' to the external display of the regalia, no more sought to be paradoxical than did his contemporary across the Channel, Coke, who made the striking observation that the mortal king was God-made, but the immortal king, man-made."<sup>14</sup> The sovereign's power always derived from his hollowness; when the Elizabethan legalists attempt to conceive a figure whose two bodies are "inseparable, though distinct," whose presence is at once divided and singular, they are merely enacting in the realm of theory the bafflement and awe every subject should feel before a sovereign who "embodies" the absolute—absolute presence and identity—as a divided, derivative and irreducibly theatrical phenomenon. Indeed, the daemonic complicity between the traitor and the devotee, between those who would cast the king out and those who would raise him up, was perhaps



evident all along in the Renaissance and late-medieval conviction that the sovereign was most truly present when he was present in an exclusively vicarious form—after his death and in his effigy.<sup>15</sup>

Writing at a time when the sovereign had in fact become a threshold figure, Hobbes may differ from his royalist forebears primarily in the degree of his awareness that the sovereign's spectacular ambiguity implicates the theorist's own desires. When Hobbes writes in the introduction to *Leviathan* that man is both the "Matter" and the "Artificer" of the "Artificial Man," and asserts that to know the sovereign truly one must "read thy-self," his contemporary readers would have already known that the gaze they encounter through this reflexive activity is not their own. For as Corbett and Lightbown point out, the face that looks out from the frontispiece is a portrait of the philosopher himself.<sup>16</sup> Hobbes's impulse to make himself the matter as well as the artificer of the fantasmal king may amount to a self-ironic comment on his stated hope that when he "shall have set down his own reading," the reader will only need consider "if he also find not the same in himself." But it might also acknowledge how closely the philosopher's desire to conjure the "dead of whom he dreams" likens him to the pagan who knows the ghost in the mirror is his own.

## Notes

1. *Glyph* 8 (1981), 57. On the spectacular nature of sovereign power, see also Michel Foucault, who argues that in the age of monarchy the prince made his "unrestrained presence" felt through a public ceremony of torture characterized by its visibility: "It must be seen by all almost as its triumph" (*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* [New York, 1979], pp. 49, 34), and Marie-Hélène Huet, who describes the monarchic spectacle of punishment in terms of a representational and juridical economy based on "image projection"—"to judge in the name of the king was to purify the sovereign's image"—and argues more broadly that the distancing structure of political theater determined the subject in a partial and alienated role, as "a personage endlessly waiting to be" (*Rehearsing the Revolution* [Berkeley, 1982], pp. 55, 35).
2. *Leviathan*, ed. C. B. Macpherson (Harmondsworth and London, 1968), p. 223. All subsequent references are to this edition and will be cited in the text by page number only.
3. *Basilikon Doron* (1609; reprint, London, 1808), p. 5.
4. *Representation* (New York, 1969), pp. 4, 7.
5. *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton, 1959), p. 5.
6. Insofar as it suggests that the subject's initial inward impressions take the form of representations with their own, unknowable origins, the daemonic brings Hobbes's theory of "original fancy" in line with the psychoanalytic paradox of "original fantasy." Laplanche and Pontilis describe the autoerotic origins of subjectivity in terms of a circular moment when sexuality, "disengaged from any natural object, moves into the

- field of fantasy and by that very fact becomes sexuality" ("Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 49 [1968], 16).
7. *A Comparative Discourse of the Bodies Natural and Politique* (London, 1606; reprint, Westmead, 1969), p. 99. Cited hereafter in text by page number.
  8. "The Inscription of the King's Memory," *Yale French Studies* 59 (1980), 20.
  9. Jean-Luc Nancy, "Larvatus Pro Deo," *Glyph* 2 (1977), 14.
  10. *Ibid.*, 27. In a splendid analysis of the regal spectacle as a "theater of conscience," Jonathan Goldberg suggests that the king's own self-speculation entails a limitless theatricality which makes "the boundary between spectator and spectacle elusive": "That moment of self-consciousness remains a theatrical scene, for the king sees himself being seen—by the audience without, and by one within, the eye of God, observing him as he is observed. Conscience/consciousness, which treads the boundary between interiority and exteriority, and which . . . imposes an outward gaze upon the inner self, leads to an all-pervasive theatricality and the effacement of other normative distinctions" (*James I and the Politics of Literature* [1983], Baltimore, p. 148).
  11. Following a number of French writers of the period, Margery Corbett and R. W. Lightbown argue that the frontispiece was produced by the French engraver Abraham Bosse, who was active during the time Hobbes was writing *Leviathan* in Paris, and suggest that "in themselves the English inscriptions are sufficient proof that the invention of the imagery with its carefully tabulated parallels [to the text] is Hobbes' own work" (*The Comely Frontispiece: The Emblematic Title-Page in England 1550–660* [London, 1979], p. 222).
  12. The relationship between the image's triangulation of gazes and the theatricality of the sovereign presence is suggested by the structure of the king's own theater, the court masque. Stephen Orgel shows that the regal spectacle was designed according to perspective lines which were true for only one seat in the theater, the king's, so that the subjects in attendance were made constantly aware that their own vision is tangential to the king's authentic, narcissistically self-confirming sight (*The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* [Berkeley, 1975], pp. 10–11). Paradoxically, Hobbes's graphic image of majesty suggests that the power of the king's "Artificial person" is assured insofar as we view it simultaneously from the positions of the subject and the king, and discern through it the irresolvably tangential nature of our own "authentic" sight.
  13. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, p. 22.
  14. *Ibid.*, pp. 422–23.
  15. *Ibid.*, p. 426.
  16. Corbett and Lightbown, *The Comely Frontispiece*, p. 224

## Heresy, Orthodoxy, and the Politics of Religious Discourse: The Case of the English Family of Love

THE FAMILY OF LOVE was an important radical spiritualist movement of sixteenth-century Europe and England.<sup>1</sup> Jan van Dorsten calls the Family of Love the “most controversial and probably the most influential” of the “unofficial churches” of London.<sup>2</sup> The movement’s publication history suggests its vitality: Christopher Vittels, “an Elizabethan mechanick preacher,” generated a sufficient audience to justify his translating twelve of Hendrick Niclaes’s works into English and smuggling them into England from Cologne.<sup>3</sup> We know from records of the 1580 persecution of the sect that an efficient network coordinated members in Elizabeth’s court, with a strong sect in Wisbech, and perhaps with the many other conventicles in south and eastern England.<sup>4</sup> A twenty-year gap in the evidence begins in 1580, but Alastair Hamilton suggests that the 1603 Familist Petition to James I, responding indignantly to his attack on the sect in *Basiliakon Doron*, implies the Family’s silence rather than its demise in the last two decades of Elizabeth’s reign.<sup>5</sup> That petition does lament the sect’s dwindling size and wealth, though, and Familist sects do not reappear during the Commonwealth. The English Family of Love probably died out, as an organized group, sometime during the early seventeenth century.

Familist influence remains a thing to reckon with during that period, however. As Hamilton argues, the fact that Niclaes’s works were available in print in English and in numerous manuscript translations “alone entitles Niclaes to a place of exceptional importance in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, for he was one of the very few *spiritualisten* whose works existed in translation” before the 1640s;<sup>6</sup> his books were republished by Giles Calvert and George Wittington later in the decade. The Family of Love looms large again in the ideological conflicts that preceded and attended the English Civil Wars: attacks on “Familism”—most often a blanket term for spiritualist or “inner” religion—abound in the seventeenth-century literature on heresy and elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> Hamilton argues that Niclaes’s ideas became “absorbed” in “a broad spiritual current” that included Robert Gell, John Everard, and the English Anabaptists.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, Gerrard Winstanley read and was influenced by Familist mortalism and utopian visions,<sup>9</sup> and John Milton openly defended Familists in *The Reason of Church Government*

*Urg'd*.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the most specific and enduring influence, however, was on the development of Quaker thought, though Geoffrey F. Nuttall and Hugh Barbour sense that specific texts or encounters may be less responsible than Familist ideas "in the air."<sup>11</sup> As late as 1687, John Evelyn records that a "Familist" from the Isle of Ely testified before the king that his group, numbering at least sixty members, was "a sort of refined quakers."<sup>12</sup>

Still, the Family of Love, despite the wealth of evidence that it was both practically and ideologically important from the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries, eludes historical description—for reasons intrinsic both to its social and textual behavior and even to its doctrine.<sup>13</sup> This is an historical as well as an historiographical problem that has interesting implications for criticism of the religious literature of early modern England. It suggests that we should be less interested in establishing fixed definitions of religious identity than in constructing a model of literary discourse dynamic enough to accommodate a problematic of identity and group definition.

The Family of Love was outlawed as heretical wherever it appeared, and it is fair to suppose that members would have tried hard to leave a fragmented documentary record. But even when we *do* have textual remains—and we have quite a few<sup>14</sup>—they defy scholarly efforts to induce a definition of Familism and Familists or to establish a distinct position for it in a taxonomy of sixteenth-century religion. A confession deposed in 1561 to Sir William More, justice of the peace in Guilford, in which Thomas Chaundler and Robert Sterte publicly abjure membership in the Surrey Family of Love, suggests that the signifying practices and the social definition of the group are contradictory in a way that creates this interesting historiographical problem. The confession tells us, on the one hand, that the Surrey Family "holde, that none ought to receiue the sacraments before he receiue their whole ordinaunces: as first, he mvst be admitted with a kisse, then his feete mvst be washed, then handes laide on him: and so receiued." But on the other hand, "They holde, the Popes seruice, & this seruice now vsed in the Church, to be naught, & yet to be by them vsed as free in the Lorde, to whome nothing is vnclene."<sup>15</sup> The first article affirms the marriage of ritual and meaning; the second divorces them, assessing official rituals not as false but as meaningless. The first defines the Surrey Family as a sect; the second, as an invisible group of silent dissenters within the national church. The first, alone, would make them quite easy to define, but the second raises some hard questions: if known members of a Familist sect can participate in prayer-book service, how can we be sure that other apparent Church of England members aren't Familists too? If Family members are so hard to distinguish, how will we detect sympathizers? And if Familists are willing, when at church, to say what they believe is not, what else might they say without believing it? Perhaps this very confession was, to those who made it, "naught."

Familists' Nicodemism—their readiness to simulate doctrinal and ritual conformity when called upon to do so<sup>16</sup>—thwarts efforts to ascertain the religious identity of individuals and to limn the boundaries of the group. This tendency is not an opportunistic modification of an originally hard-nosed sectarianism: the Family's founder, the Dutch merchant-prophet Hendrick Niclaes, derived his Nicodemism from Sebastian Franck's conception of an invisible church whose harmony transcends the irrelevant, divisive rituals and laws of the visible churches and nations. Niclaes's insistence that his followers simultaneously conform to the local creed and obey, as a sect of the pure, his own rigid hierarchy of elders, sacramental regimes, and social and economic laws instituted social and signifying practices that belong to the history of doctrine as well as to the history of church government. The difficulties of defining the Family of Love, then, are not extrinsic products of our historical method, only to be transcended or explained away: they shape the movement's complex relations to official detection and interdiction and are intrinsic to Familism as a social, linguistic, and even doctrinal configuration.

The problems of fixing Familist identity, for groups and for individuals, bear on a recent development in the criticism of early modern literature in English, the special study of "Protestant poetics." Most book-length examinations of Protestant poetics begin with the problem of defining Protestantism without relying on meanings (of *Calvinist*, *Puritan*, *Protestant*) and even words (*Anglican*) that came into being only in the course of the historical period they examine.<sup>17</sup> Following Barbara Lewalski, critics in this school concur that the solution to the problem lies in limiting the definition of Protestantism to a core of doctrine, a "fundamental direction" or "broad Protestant consensus in regard to doctrine and the spiritual life":<sup>18</sup> questions of church order and discipline are omitted. The results are that an essential Protestantism, understood to transcend ecclesiastical conflicts, identifies the individuals, groups, and texts from which it was abstracted, and that this identity can be assigned to all English believers except recusants.

The appropriateness of this approach to the very complex interactions of mutually infiltrating groups—particularly Puritans and "church papists"—is open to question. Surely, the doctrinal consistency and institutional legibility of Catholicism and mainstream Puritanism tempt us to see their relations to the English Church in terms of the clash of concrete identities. But, as Patrick Collinson and John Bossy have shown in their studies of these two groups, religious identity *in practice* was a very complex matter.<sup>19</sup> The Family of Love may have taken the process of infiltration to its practical limit, making it not merely a necessity imposed from without but a doctrine chosen from within. Studying this group may shift our focus from the essentializing concepts of identity that prevail in the "Protestant poetics" movement to ones more attuned to the delicately diacritical interactions of interpenetrating religious discourses and social practices.

We cannot account for the English Family of Love without recognizing that

the official communion was penetrated by dissenting and even heretical groups and individuals, who brought their beliefs with them. This group makes it very difficult to imagine that an essential Protestantism, made up of doctrines distilled from their setting in the conflicts over church government, describes the religious experience of non-Catholic English believers. But recognizing the heretics' importance *to the development of orthodoxy itself* cannot consist in a methodological interest in establishing fixed definitions of group and individual religious identity. Rather, the hermeneutic problem posed to orthodox contemporaries by Familist Nicodemism suggests that the extreme difficulty of defining religious identity, far from being an impediment to the historian's obligation to describe objectively, is an important part of the historical experience we need to analyze.<sup>20</sup>

Familist Nicodemism also suggests that, in the relations between heresy and orthodoxy, the conditions of meaning themselves are a terrain of political struggle. At issue among the Surrey Familists and the Church of England was the heretics' ability to infiltrate silently the established ritual and assign to it illicit meanings—or to deny it meaning altogether. It would be tempting to invoke a Derridean explanation for this conflict, for it seems likely that textuality subverts ideology here. That is, if dominant ideology in the Western tradition has posited "metaphysics"—essentialist thought or a philosophy of presence that founds a stable hierarchy of signs and meanings and forces transparency on words by fiercely controlling and limiting their meanings—official control of the interpretation of ritual could be regarded as ideological. On the other hand, if "textuality," as the sheer uncontrolled activity of language, proliferates meanings and thus demonstrates how ideology is always being deconstructed by the multivalence, redundancy, and opacity of its own language, Familist Nicodemism could be said to be subversive in the ways that textuality is subversive. But a model according to which ideology and textuality are incommensurate and opposed ill suits the relations between the Church of England and its Familist members: it seems more likely that the two groups defined themselves and each other in the context of one another and of their shared conflict.

Orthodoxy, like heresy, occurred in a process of separating itself from and incorporating its opposition. Terry Eagleton suggests that dominant and oppressed ideologies exist and are mutually constitutive—a notion that is useful for English religious discourse. According to him, the dominant ideology "incorporates within itself (not without ceaseless struggle) the codes and forms whereby subordinate classes 'practice' their relations to the social formation as a whole."<sup>21</sup> And the strategies of textuality are available to both. The analogy tying ideology to *langue* or the fixed structure of language and textuality to *parole* or the unfixed, arbitrary speech act is thus broken down: we are free to observe the reciprocal relations that occur between these elements in specific ideological "conjunctures." Eagleton argues that "conjunctural meaning"—meaning *in situ*, whether in dominant or subordinate ideologies—"constantly is trying to captivate *langue*-meaning and

constantly is being captivated by it." As a result, there remains at every conjuncture the theoretical possibility that polysemy "in place" will become trapped and fixed and that closure "in place" will be opened and dispersed.<sup>22</sup> Like the identity of groups and individuals, meaning is shaped by the relation, at once antagonistic and diacritical, between heresy and orthodoxy. These propositions, if sound, will allow us to observe the role of Familist heresy in shaping orthodox doctrine and convictions about the possibility of signification, attribution, and interpretive authority. I will attempt to fulfill part of that agenda in this essay, with an eye to analyzing the discursive construction of the self in the context of religious politics.<sup>23</sup>

## I

Both in the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries, readers have castigated the English translations of Niclaes's books and, by implication, Niclaes's own prose style. Julia Ebel notes that "Familist prose is characteristically laden with extravagant and confused metaphors,"<sup>24</sup> while Joan Deitz Moss attributes the wide range of differing doctrinal stances among Niclaes's English followers to his "ambiguous rhetoric": "Niclaes' language becomes rhapsodic and replete with poetic figures. His prose conveys many shades of meaning and thus can be interpreted in various ways."<sup>25</sup>

These comments are not new, however; they were first made in Elizabethan anti-Familist propaganda. In 1578 John Rogers complains that Niclaes's prose "doeth not deale so plainly, as one being ledde by the spirite of GOD . . . but verie subtilly and darkely," that it presents not an argument but "a riddle, or darke speeche," and that its "tearmes and phrases are geyson and unwonted . . . [to] dasell the simple . . . not expressing his minde in plaine termes and speeche." He finishes by drawing a correspondence between Niclaes's "barbarous stile, and his ignoraunce."<sup>26</sup> In her 1580 proclamation against the Familists, Queen Elizabeth charges that they use "a monstrous new kinde of speech . . . by which they do move ignorant and simple people at the first rather to marvel at them than to understand them"; on these grounds, she prohibits Familist "preachers and professors" and Familist books.<sup>27</sup> Modern analyses that condemn or dismiss Familist language as muddled, confusing, opaque, and parabolic fail to recognize that these attacks were first made in the setting of a political struggle, a struggle in which orthodox power sought above all to extinguish Familist discourse. Scholarship repeats these charges at the cost of engaging as an unconfessedly interested party in a political conflict. If the question "What clear meaning do Niclaes's difficult texts obscure?" is partisan, perhaps we may ask instead, "How is this obscurity strategic?"

Niclaes's texts are obscure on the basic issues of his ontology. Students of his doctrine have been unable to assign to him a single doctrine, for instance, on such ontologically important questions as "What, and when, are heaven and hell?"

In his 1580 confession, Leonard Romsey simultaneously renounces the contradictory propositions that eternity is present in this life (since heaven and hell are mental states) and that the mind shall be resurrected into immortality.<sup>28</sup> In an analysis of Nicolaes's *Evangelium Regni*,<sup>29</sup> Moss shows that Romsey repeats Nicolaes's own "strangely contradictory" teaching about the immortality of the body and soul: Nicolaes "speaks of the kingdom of God coming upon the earth and believes that Familists have already become part of it"; he endorses both mortalism—the doctrine that the spirit alone is immortal—and the more orthodox view that the body shall rise in the last day.<sup>30</sup> Other passages in *Evangelium Regni* support a third view, argued by Norman T. Burns, that Nicolaes was an annihilationist, believing that heaven and hell are neither imminent in a temporal future nor local in space but fully present as the blessedness or wretchedness of living people.<sup>31</sup> Apparently, none of these is the "true" Familist doctrine hidden in a smokescreen created by the others; instead, these texts create a range of possible loci for reality—from one devoid of history and matter to another entirely constrained by them, with plenty of possibilities in between.

It's no wonder that we might be "daselled" by the following prophetic passage, from *Proverbia HN* (i.e., of Hendrick Nicolaes). Coming after a narration of the seven "Thorowe-breaking[s] of [God's] light"—that is, of providential history through the incarnation of Christ—it announces the eighth and final epiphany, HN himself:

Through which gracious Woord and HN, God reuealed the Appearing of the Comming of his *Christ*, and the New Daye of his righteous Judgment, as also the flowing-fourth of his holie Spirit of Loue, to the Awaking and Rysing-vpp of all his holyons, out-of the Sleaape, to their Glorious-lordlynes with *Iesus Christ*, and to an euerlasting fast-standing kingdom of the godlie Maiestie, vpon the Earth, according to his Promises.

Euen-thus hath God declared with *HN*, the Eight Thorowe-breaking of his true Light, vpon the Earth, wherein the Lorde, the God of heauen, restored the former kingdom with his garnishing together with all that which God hath spoken from the Beginning of the Worlde, through the Mouth of his holie Propheates, and of the Euangelistes of his *Christ*: and the-same Eight Thorowe-breaking of the true Light of God vpon the Earth, is the New Daye, to the Renewing of the Life, which God hath to-fore appointed, to reueale thesame in the last Time, for to iudge in thesame, the vniuersall Earth with Righteousnes . . . and also for to declare euenso vpon the Earth, in the same true Light of the New or Eight Daye, the Mysteries of God and *Christ*, euen from the Beginning of the Worlde, to-vnto the Ende.<sup>32</sup>

In the opening words here Nicolaes blurs the difference between himself and the "Woord," so that his own ontological situation is at issue when that of God's revelation changes. As the passage draws to its revelatory close, its persistently squinting pronouns dismantle a relatively stable distinction between the Eight Thorowe-breaking (agent) and the New Day (the context of action): finally, the former is to declare something in—itself; but itself augmented, replenished, transformed, a stage of itself in which it fully *is* what it has come to declare. The



triple identity of the prophesied reality, the prophetic statement, and the prophet himself would advance the text to a status of perfect, complete reality. The burden of proof lies on Niclaes's text—or on Niclaes himself: it, or he, must constitute the truth of its, or his, own declaration. This prophesy of apocalypse now raises severe problems of referentiality that are grounded in problems of textual and personal authority: either history is desubstantiated, into an allegory for spiritual reality, or the person of HN actually is the New Jerusalem. I've been unable to discover a Familist text that rules out one of these readings.

This literary difficulty emerges again elsewhere as an equally marvelous political contradiction. Niclaes inherited the mystical doctrines of the German spiritualists and thus started with a thoroughly individualist and noninstitutional form of devotion. He drew from sources like the *Imitatio Christi* and the *Theologia Germanica* an emphasis on the resignation of the individual will to God and thus on an inner experience that replaces external forms of worship.<sup>33</sup> And he shared with Sebastian Franck the convictions that the Spirit, not Scripture, conveys divine truth and that an indivisible church would unify divided Christianity.<sup>34</sup> As Ernst Troeltsch points out, these basically mystical convictions place no stress on relations between individuals. They exhibit a "positive sociological character" only in that they look forward to a unity of all souls in their creator: thus they are indifferent to present ecclesiastical affiliations and unlikely to stimulate separation from a local church.<sup>35</sup> So Niclaes deeply contradicted this mystical and non-institutional tendency of his spiritualism when he strove to embody it in a rigidly structured sect that, though nonseparating, would recognize him as its absolutely authoritative patriarch.

This contradiction corresponds with that underlying the Eight Thorowebreaking passage: in both, the spiritualist's transcendence of the material world into a realm of neoplatonic unity collides with an assertion that the divine order is materially embodied on this earth. And in neither can we be sure whether these states of perfection belong to the present epoch or must be awaited. This pattern repeats the Surrey Familists' contradictory management of their Nicodemism, their simultaneous denial and affirmation of ritual meaning. The difficulty is to know what analytic stories we can tell about this correspondence. We might conclude that the contradictory referentiality of Niclaes's texts generated contradictions in Familist belief and practice. Certainly it authorized them. But we might also be able to say that it *managed* them (or attempted to), in a political situation in which Familism was unable to establish itself as an autonomous spiritual and social world.

Some of these contradictory patterns very clearly support the group's efforts to function in a hostile world. Chaundler and Sterte assert that the Surrey sect required new members to relinquish their possessions to common ownership, while elders were able to accumulate large fortunes and members with means were to aid the less well off with alms.<sup>36</sup> This simultaneous maintenance and

abolition of personal property is authorized, in turn, by Niclaes's *Ordo Sacerdotis*, the sect's "Rule" (never printed presumably because its use was restricted to elders), and by his utopian prophesy, *Terra Pacis*. In the former, Niclaes prescribes an elaborate priestly hierarchy. Priests at each of seven ranks below Niclaes himself would consecrate and train those just below them. They would relinquish all personal property and be supported by the people's tithes, while financial exchange within families and between members would be so strictly subject to priestly approval that the whole organization takes on the appearance of a mercantile alliance regulated by a priestly elite.<sup>37</sup> *Terra Pacis*, on the other hand, repudiates both social hierarchy and private property, describing a communist Jerusalem that, because it inhabits the same highly ambiguous temporal scheme that the *Proverbia* creates for HN himself, cannot be dismissed as belonging to the future.<sup>38</sup> In the relationship of text with practice, the referential ambiguity of Niclaes's language allows his followers to function as a community of the pure that nonetheless imitates, and traffics with, the corrupt world around it.

The recurrent scandal of Familist sexual liberty provides an insight into the ways in which Niclaes's ambiguity might manage the group's internal relations. Moss's survey of this difficult terrain shows that, while the sect's name may have attracted members who wished to locate their sexual activity in a hospitable theology, rumors of Niclaes's bigamy were false, and his doctrine in fact did not support profligacy of any kind. The probable basis for the charge, she argues, is a disapproval of his doctrine of perfection amplified into propaganda.<sup>39</sup> But we should observe how easily one can distort Niclaes's doctrine of perfection into an endorsement of sexual liberty: one need only simplify the referential difficulty of his language, omitting several of its elements and thus relieving its contradictory tensions. Oddly enough, errant Familists and orthodox attackers, whether Presbyterian clerics or popular satirists, are united in making this mistake: they amputate elements from Niclaes's oscillating paradoxes of time and matter, making them unproblematic and hence scandalous. The same error in reading strategy produces the opposite result when William C. Johnson cites passages in which Niclaes inveighs against carnal liberty and asserts the necessity of obedience, concluding that "there is absolutely nothing in Niclaes' writings to substantiate any of the defamatory charges of moral licentiousness."<sup>40</sup> In fact, passages he cites, and many others like them, argue strongly that some continental Familists *did* express their spiritual perfection sexually, and that they regarded Niclaes's texts as their justification in doing so. The prophet's protests are efforts to restore the tentative balance of his paradoxical doctrine, to reverse a misprision they actually invite. At the same time, they command his followers to submit themselves to the authority of his mysterious writing.

The difficulty of Familist texts cannot be explained away, then, by an appeal to their mystical effort to express the inexpressible. Even those moments of a Familist text that appear most entirely to transcend or ignore its political situation

are in fact political: when they make a point about evading politics, they are actually arguing against *cuius regio eius religio*, against national conflicts arising from religious differences, for liberty from legal restraint of worship, and for a Europe at peace. Within the movement, the language of these books is directly involved in mediating relationships between the heresiarch and his followers. In a spiritualist context—that is, within a theology that recognizes as absolutely authoritative only personal experiences of the Spirit—they work to extend HN's liberty and authority and to circumscribe and define the liberty and authority of others. Inside the Family of Love, textuality functions to dominate.

How? It would appear, at first assessment, that textuality within the group subverts the heresiarch's authority. Central to Familist mysticism is Niclaes's assertion that the identity of the "begodded man" is no longer his own but God's: human identity becomes perfect when it is replaced. In the social context mediated by Familist texts, the veracity of the texts depends on their speaker's prophetic identity, but that identity can be demonstrated only by its own absence. If such a demonstration were possible—and Niclaes's many formal efforts to remove himself from the text are probably efforts to accomplish one—it would itself rely on the speaker's full presence to authorize it. Spiritual experience, as a source of authority, cannot be contained in writing. One solution Niclaes envisions is the equation of self and language suggested in the Eight Thorowe-breaking revelation. In *Terra Pacis*, for instance, the perfect inhabitants of the City of Peace are strangers to images and similitudes because they "are One with God, and God is One with them . . . Whose Name likewise they vse not in vayne. For all what they speak of the Godhead, to the laude of his holie Name, thatsame hath a lueing Foorme in them."<sup>41</sup> Niclaes would absorb the intransigent *otherness* of language into the one indistinguishing person of a multitude of speakers merged into God; again, speaker, speech, and referent would be the same. Niclaes makes the claim in more personal terms in the *Prophetie* [*sic*]: "I gaue-fourthe the Sounde of the Voyce of the gracious Woorde of the Lorde. . . . And euenso, out of the Loue of my God and Christ, *became* the gracious Woorde of the Lorde."<sup>42</sup>

These envisioned solutions fail to provide a means for the written text to demonstrate Niclaes's authority, because the transformation of the person into the word and the incorporation of the word as a person devalue writing. Not even Scripture is safe from this antilinguistic prophesy: Niclaes describes the spiritually reborn true believer as "the *true* Newe Testament" (emphasis mine),<sup>43</sup> implying that the written Scripture is, by comparison, false. If indeed the authority of Niclaes's spiritual experience relies on the authority of the text that represents him, his ideal of the perfect text as the experience of the begodded individual threatens the very texts that proclaim that ideal and assert its truth.

Perhaps this dilemma can explain why Niclaes privileges silence as the perfect mode of expression in books thick with repetitions of his claims to authority. And perhaps the proliferating laws in the *Ordo Sacerdotis* are there to confirm the

liberty of their maker. Certainly, despite his lifelong claim that he was a loyal Roman Catholic, Niclaes introduced into spiritualism a familiar problem of the Protestant movement—that of simultaneously validating and containing personal authority. Niclaes met this problem *en face* when two of his followers, Huibert Duifuis and Cornelis Jansen, refused to accept his divinity and charged him with vitiating spiritual life by developing a religion of externals and ceremonies. The full social implications are even clearer, though, in the defection of Hendrik Jansen van Barrefelt, a Family elder. Barrefelt's separation was precipitated by his experiencing a vision of his own. In the books he later published under the pseudonym Hiel (the "Life of God"), he rejected Niclaes's claims to be an exclusively authorized mediator, styled himself instead a mere example and witness of divine illumination, and taught his followers how to read the signs of divine life within them.<sup>44</sup> If Niclaes could ground his authority to speak for God on private spiritual experience, so could someone else; so in fact could everyone else. On the very authority with which he demanded his followers' silence, they could claim their speech; once his liberty became a model for theirs, their authority could supplant his.

This is the context in which Niclaes's language exercises its social strategies. Like many Protestant reformers, the heresiarch decries preachers who would teach Christ before they have experienced him.<sup>45</sup> And just as the preacher must wait patiently for God-given understanding before he can rightly teach, so must his disciples wait before they can understand. Niclaes frankly recognizes that his own explanations are irrelevant to this process of illumination:

And if yow cannot acknowledge this for the truth, yet look well alwayes hereto, that ye do not blaspheme the same which ye know not. And I likewise shal not blame yow, although that yow cannot comprehend the same. For the godly gifts cannot be brought to any one by violence or compulsion, for they are the gifts of God.<sup>46</sup>

But Niclaes never atomizes his community of knowers and learners. Communication between the illuminated is perfect but silent; it participates in the oneness of ideal signification by a process of mutual recognition. The spiritual man can "be seene with all Eyes of the Spirit and . . . be hearde with all Eares of the Spirit," though he is "inuisible before all Eyes of the fleash / and also unhearable with all Eares of the fleash."<sup>47</sup> God's first message to his chosen is therefore "that he ought to keepe-silence / and becom vterlie dombe in himself"—precisely so that he can "harken vnto the vpright serviceable Woord of the holie Vnderstanding,"<sup>48</sup> that is, to the speech of initiates and particularly to Niclaes's own texts. The fact that this passage appears early in Niclaes's *Prophetie*, a lengthy diatribe against disobedience in the Family, suggests that the demand is not for assent to the content of Niclaes's utterances but rather for submission to their undemonstrable authority.<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, Niclaes assigns to language the task of identifying true believ-

ers. Though he cannot make language signify, he can rarefy it as a way of articulating and enforcing his group's hierarchical order. The higher one's status in the Family of Love, the more talking one is allowed to do. Niclaes prescribes that elders shall "talk freele" only with young men of thirty, who then "haue the Libertie, for to vtter-fourth, in all Boldness, the Heauenlie Reuelations of the Kingdom of God"; only after an examination of their "right Knowledge" do they simultaneously obtain the rights to evangelize and to marry.<sup>50</sup> Among the Surrey Familists, "the Elder must not speak, the Bishop being present: nor the Deacon in the presence of any of them."<sup>51</sup> Loquacity is a privilege and a mark of rank, and therefore a mark of spiritual aptitude. These social practices mirror the contradiction between Niclaes's ideal of silent discourse and his own sesquipedalian style.

So the *illuminati* encounter God and each other—or God in each other—in silence, and discipline their subordinates by enjoining their silence in a torrent of words. Niclaes's *books* serve a related function in this project of demonstrating spiritual identity: if understanding, like meaning, is independent of the text, and if a perfect knowledge of meaning is arrived at without the text's work, then one can exploit textual opacity as a way of distinguishing not between meanings but between audiences.<sup>52</sup>

The *Proverbia HN* will exemplify this strategy. The English translation was probably made by Christopher Vittels under Niclaes's supervision and was printed about 1574–75.<sup>53</sup> So we know that it is subsequent to the prophet's 1567 vision, in which God repeatedly instructed him to make his writings "more plain to the understanding . . . [to] write them again more distinctly."<sup>54</sup> Niclaes responded by asserting the simultaneous clarity and obscurity of his works. The *Proverbia* declares on its title page that "I will open my mouth in Prouerbes and Similitudes," and that

to the Children of Loue and the vpriht Disciples of Iesu Christ, it is geeuen to vnderstand the Myserie of the heauenlie Kingdom: But to Such as are ther-without, it is not geeuen. For-that-cause, all thinges chaunce vnto them in Similitudes and Prouerbes.

The problem of distinguishing the "Children of Loue" from "such as are ther-without" is not only the volume's subject: it is its assigned function as well. Declaring later that where "ther is no vpriht Difference observed" between elders and disciples, "theare can it not go-well with any Soule,"<sup>55</sup> the *Proverbia* goes on to stipulate that the distinction between these critical categories is a difference in interpretive capacity. In a ritual derived from the Book of Revelation, a Familist's initiation as elder can be verified by his ability to read the unique and secret name inscribed on a white stone: "And that is the Difference betwixt the true Beeing, which is remaining with the Elders / and the Images or Figures, which are administered vnto the Disciples, to an introduction for them vnto the true Beeing."<sup>56</sup> Elders and disciples, looking at the same sign, see two different things. True

believers read “the true Beeing” in the sign; that is, they see it as a perfectly transparent indicator, or rather the very substance of the truth. The stone is able to distinguish between readers, however, because of its simultaneous illegibility. It has a second structure as an image or figure, a signifier remote from its significance. The same could be said of the “Prouerbes and Similitudes” promised on the title page of the *Proverbia* and, indeed, of the *Proverbia* itself. Seen from within the Family of Love, Nicolaes’s “riddle[s], or darke speeche” function not to “dasell the simple” but to identify true members.

Nicolaes’s response to his dream may explain why he seems persistently to promise clarity but never to deliver it: clarity is an aspect of the speaker’s and his listeners’ illuminated consciousness, not of a new construction of the signifier. So in *Terra Pacis* he warns:

Wherfor, because that thesame now which is to come [i.e., the Kingdom], mought appeere, so do we not speake couerdly as in secret-manner, in priuie Places or Corners, but naked and apparent in the Daye.

But if now our Testimonies be couered vnto anyone, or be witnessed or spoken in hidden or secret maner, before anyone, then are they couered, secret, or hidden, before those that perish.<sup>57</sup>

In the *Proverbia*, Nicolaes assures us that “the Wisdom speake[s]-fourth her Prouerbes, to her Children, and the Love vttereth her Vnderstanding, to her Lovers / to thende that they shoulde heare and vnderstand thesame in secreat / and then tell it fourth againe openlie.”<sup>58</sup> But we may surmise by now that this open expression will appear to us no different from the secret, veiled proverbs. If we don’t understand these utterances—and it seems only honest to admit that we don’t—we’re forced to concede that we’re “ther-without.”

## II

As a social strategy for identifying Family members to each other, Familist Nicodemism and the textual ambiguity implicit in it do more than consolidate the authority of the heresiarch. Precisely the same strategies function—again problematically—to manage the group’s relations to official interdiction and surveillance.

The internal strategy I have been outlining works not to hide a single clear, heretical meaning, and not only to regulate the group’s hierarchy: it also works to prevent hostile infiltration by identifying members of the group to one another. But how can readers of the stone—or of the *Proverbia*—indicate their successful readings to the community? What gesture signifies that an authoritative interpretation has taken place? Here all Familists become enmeshed in the problems of self-representation, of proof and testimony, that plague the group’s founder.

If speech and interpretation are inadequate to their assigned tasks of demonstrating spiritual authority, true membership cannot be ascertained.

The safety of any forbidden group depends on its ability to identify its members, but it appears that the textual politics of the Family of Love would make it highly permeable to infiltration. This difficulty is compounded by the ambivalence Nicolaes and his followers express about whether the Family of Love is a sect at all: they claim it is both a sect outside of and opposed to a dominant cult, and a mystical association of true believers within it. It seems that the Church of England and the English Family of Love could infiltrate each other. When Chaundler and Sterte report that Familists in Surrey "hold yt they ought to kepe silence amongst them selues, that the liberty they haue in the Lorde, may not be espied out of others,"<sup>59</sup> they efface any boundary between internal and external political relations, and suggest that the sect's heretical and outlawed status shapes all Familist discourse. This would mean that the relations between Familist identity and Familist language are always relations between forbidden identity and forbidden language. And if this is so of a heretical group that can disappear into the national church, then Familist problems of referentiality and identity will help to shape orthodox discourse, from within. Textual practice in this context becomes, in itself, an arena of political struggle, as each of the antagonists, Familism and a nascent "Anglican" identity, moves toward self-definition by responding to the presence of the other within it.

To Elizabeth and James I, the central heresy of Familism was its doctrine of the individual perfection of the true believer, who attains perfect liberty in a moment of mental congruence with the divine, of being "Godded with God." James clearly saw the political threat in this doctrine while he was still on the Scottish throne. In *Basilikon Doron*, he argues that Familists epitomize Puritanism "because they thinke them selues onely pure, and . . . without sinne, the onely true church," a claim implicitly rebellious. Specifically, James deplores

their humours . . . not onely [in] agreeing with the generall rule of all Anabaptistes, in the contempt of the ciuill Magistrate, and in leaning to their owne dreames and reuelations: but particularly with this sect, in accounting all men prophane that swears [sic] not to all their fantasies; in making for euery particulare question of the policie of the church, as great commotion, as if the article of the Trinitie were called in controuersie; in making the scriptures to be ruled by their conscience, & not their conscience by the Scriptures; and he that denies the least iote of their groundes, *sit tibi quam ethnicus & publicanus*; not worthe to enjoy the benefite of breathing, much less to participate with them of the Sacraments: and before that any of their groundes be impugned, let King, people, law & all be tred [sic] vnder foote.<sup>60</sup>

The Familists' 1606 supplication disavows disloyal intentions,<sup>61</sup> but the (unofficial) anonymous response continues James's argument by jointly charging Familists and Presbyterians with aspiring to overthrow the magistrate and to install themselves in his seat.<sup>62</sup>

So both Elizabeth and James sternly repressed the sect and obliged its adherents to operate in rigid secrecy. The tone of the resulting relationship is evident in a report to Sir William More, which J. W. Martin associates with the Chaundler-Sterne confession and other records of More's anti-Familist efforts. The report struggles to pin down evidence on some putative Anabaptists:

We are very doughtfull (yf yt may please you) of a certen heresy of Annabaptistry which we very much feare that some of oure neighbors do holde. Not that we are able to accuse them particularly of any article touching the same secte. But by cause some of them hathe bin suspected thereof along tyme, and also by cause some other suspected in lyke case dothe frequent and use one anothers company styll.<sup>63</sup>

Lacking any positive confessional evidence, the authors of this report describe themselves as doubtful, fearful, and suspicious. And rightly so: they are obliged to collate suspicions held "along tyme," based primarily on memories of certain parishioners' daily movements and hospitality, with recent and equally circumstantial details of meetings and friendships.

Surveillance could be frustrated of its needed proof by any sectary's readiness to say, with the suspect John Warner, "What I thinke of the magistrate I will kepe to my selfe."<sup>64</sup> An autonomous, self-authorizing and silent self, above all a self whose identity cannot be fixed, appears to the state as the source of rebellion. Hence the authorities' interest in developing a counterdiscourse, one in which individuals and groups can be assigned a definitive identity. Michel Foucault suggests that the literary category "the author" originated in such a moment as this: "Texts, books, and discourses really began to have authors (other than mythical, 'sacralized' and 'sacralizing' figures) to the extent that authors became subject to punishment, that is, to the extent that discourses could be transgressive."<sup>65</sup> The historical origin of the concept "the author" is open to question. But clearly "the author" as Foucault characterizes it could provide a mechanism of attribution peculiarly suited to censorship. In the encounter of orthodoxy with Familism, moreover, this "author-function" can operate only when the discursive rules allow that a text, once attributed, be interpretable as the clear reproduction of its author's thoughts.

The confessions made by Familists unlucky enough to attract official attention display the problems encountered by the state as it enforced this discursive program. Though these documents may include much verified information about Familist doctrine and practice, they remain highly compromised speech acts. In a confession, the accused must shift from one personal identity and discursive group to another, and divest him- or herself of the heretical beliefs the confession purports to describe. But these tasks can only be accomplished when the confession reproduces, not the heretical beliefs themselves, but their formulation in the dominant discourse. However at a disadvantage as an isolated individual in an



Elizabethan prison, the confessor retains considerable power to render both authorial identity and the clarity of language problematic.

Leonard Romsey's confession interprets Niclaes's ambiguous prophesies of the Last Day as a call to rebellion only with difficulty: "The next way is [in?] my iugement sent vnto rebellion. . . . And that this their rebellion is to be looked for er it be longe this moueth me to think so because. . . ."<sup>66</sup> The hesitant, doubtful gestures point to Romsey himself, the cooperative (unrebellious) interpreter, reflecting an attempt to cooperate with the state's demand for an author. But whose self is it that confesses? The full program of a confession contradicts the very end of attribution—to lasso the rebellious self—by requiring that the speaker merge his or her speech with the official utterances of the Elizabethan church and state. The 1575 confession of Robert Sharpe, printed as a broadside with a "joint" confession by four other men,<sup>67</sup> provides an example. Sharpe relates his fall into heresy and his rescue by orthodoxy as a series of relations with advisors, authorities, and texts: "Whereas I Robert Sharpe, haue hertofore vnausedly, conceyued good opinion of certayne bookes of an aucthour" whom he identifies as Niclaes, now things are different. The "turn" or conversion occurs "now vppon conference wyth the Godly learned, (whereof some are in auctoritie)," whose instruction he substitutes for Niclaes's books. He repeatedly abjures Familism by repudiating first the author and books, and only secondarily the doctrines and the sect. And so he proceeds to renounce

all other Errours and Heresies whatsoever contrarie to the Common, Nicene, and Athanasius Creedes, or to the holye Scriptures conteyned in the Bookes of the olde and the newe Testament. And [I] doe also forsake whatsoever is repugnant to the Doctrine nowe taught and pupliquely [*sic*] set forth in the Church of England, which Doctrine I acknowledge and confesse, to be the true and Catholicke Doctrine, agreeable to the Canonickall Scriptures.

As these dual abjurations and affirmations leave behind specific matter to confirm disbelief and belief along an indefinite range of doctrine, the possibility of Sharpe's cognitive consent is lost. Unlike John Warner's, the "self" of Robert Sharpe is effaced and merges with authoritative discourse. The appended confession of John Allen, John Lydye, John Sharpe, and William Burwell makes the gesture even more decisively: they collectively swear, "I detest all the errorrs and heresies before by hym detested. I do faythfully promise here before God & you whatsoever he hath promised."

Such a confession involves a mesh of reciprocations that can only be told by "process of speech" (*Paradise Lost* 7.178) but that are in fact simultaneously in play. The state demands the firm and stable identity of authors, and the sincerity of their utterance, at the cost of contradicting its intention of absorbing the individual self of the radical tradition. Familist Nicodemism emerges as a response to this contradictory challenge: confessing Familists say all they are required to

say and join in all the required rituals while privately believing them to be meaningless images. Official records typically join expressions of outrage at this policy with resolves to seize control of Familist texts, to forbid their publication, distribution, and ownership.<sup>68</sup> Elizabeth's 1580 proclamation grounds her decision to censor on this "monstrous new kinde of speech":

These sectaries hold opinion that they may (before any magistrate, ecclesiastical or temporal, or any other person not being professed to be of their sect which they term the Family of Love) by oath or otherwise deny anything for their advantage, so as though many of them are well known to be teachers and spreaders abroad of these dangerous and damnable sects, yet by their confession they cannot be condemned, whereby they are more dangerous in any Christian realm.<sup>69</sup>

And Familists respond with repeated episodes of lying about their possession of or acquaintance with Familist books.<sup>70</sup>

For instance, "*Allen, a weaver*," was imprisoned for his Familist beliefs, escaped, and then, unhappily, encountered a justice of the peace who recognized him. William Wilkinson reports that, asked "if he had about him no bookes of *H.N.*," Allen said no—and then was found to have "diuers bookes about him."<sup>71</sup> Romsey avers that "the disciples of *H.N.* make no conscience of lyinge and dissemblinge to all them that be not of their religion," and remembers that when an official inquisition into the Wisbech sect was imminent "we had a letter from the family of loue in the court from one Doringeton and Zeale wherein we were aduertised howe to behaue our selffes befour the commissioners and charged that we should denye that we had sene any of the books of *H.N.*"<sup>72</sup> The interrogator pits his authority against Familist books, and the Familist's lie—his announcement that he has not read or does not own those books—deprives language of meaning in the very process of surrendering it to his inquisitor.

Several confessions perform this gesture in the most acute way by naming and renouncing a Familist policy of lying. For example, the Chaundler-Sterte confession tells us that "if any of them be conuented for his opinion, and doeth denie the same by open recantation: he taketh that to be a glorie vnto him, as though he had suffered persecution in this doing; and yet still inwardly mainteyning these opinions."<sup>73</sup> Three guards in Elizabeth's court—one is the "Zeale" of Romsey's anecdote—confessed that the Family of Love "may lawfully deny religion of faith before any / (i)f ther be any cause of persecution."<sup>74</sup> Here, the state's demand for a self-effacing recital of its own predetermined discourse is contradicted by its insistence that morally good language is the clear or sincere reflection of the speaker's thoughts. Operating within this vexed rhetorical situation, the confessor's statement that Familists may lie belongs to the required pattern of submissively retailed information, but at the same time it perversely suggests that he himself may be lying. By pointing out that it may be deliberately opaque—a mask of language that, instead of revealing, hides the speaker's mean-

ing—the confession refers to its status as a predetermined, immutable program. It belies the authoritative claim that its language *can* be clear and univocal.

In a protest against Niclaes's obscure style, John Knewstub charges that "to colour his craft withall, he keepeth him to the same words which the church useth . . . saue that he interlaceth some odde words, which cannot well be discerned, but by the[m] that are well acquainted with his bookes, under the which he conueyeth all his corrupt doctrine."<sup>75</sup> Knewstub believes that a secret system of typographical pointing endows commonplace terms with bizarre heretical meanings.<sup>76</sup> Perhaps he is right. But Familist Nicodemism also means that the heretical speaker's secret intentions can multiply the possible meanings of perfectly commonplace utterances without distorting them. We may consider two anecdotes that suggest that the Familists were as adept at equivocation as Robert Parson's missionaries. The Chaundler-Sterte deposition describes "certaine sleighes" practiced by the Surrey Familists,

as for example: if one of them be demaunded howe he beleeueth in the Trinitie, he will answer: I am to learne of you, & so prouoketh the demaundant to shew his opinion therein: which done, he will say then: I do beleeeue so: by the which wordes he meaneth, that he beleeueth the demaundant saith as he thinketh, but not that he thinketh so.

Similarly, they are reported to define catechumens up to thirty years old as "infants" so that they can publicly affirm a belief in infant baptism.<sup>77</sup> The speaker and the heretical community arbitrarily assign a new and private signification to words in the common culture. They then continue to use these words in their conventional contexts, and thus allow them to function separately from their new meanings. Because Familists implicitly show the relation between words and their meanings to be arbitrary, they suggest that *all* language may be conventional: they subvert not only the specific meanings attached to words by those in authority, but also their opponent's power to control language and meaning in the first place.

To draw on Eagleton's formulation, Familist ambiguity is *both* ideological—when it functions repressively to concentrate authority within the sect—and textual—when it subversively undercuts the state's efforts to fix identity and meaning. And we find an alarming recirculation of this doubleness in the group's reciprocating encounters with the state, when the heretics' subversive polysemy is appropriated into the state's repressive program for religious meaning and identity. This redoubling is most visible in a simple incident related in the Chaundler-Sterte confession: "They did prohibite bearing of weapons, but at the length, perceiuing them selues to be noted and marked for the same, they haue allowed the bearing of stauces."<sup>78</sup>

So far we have been tracing the ability of Familist discourse to deconstruct the ideals of attribution and clarity that Elizabethan authorities applied in an effort to control it. But the Family of Love was not a group of outsiders in any

clear sense: the Church of England could penetrate this heretical conclave just as thoroughly as the heretics infiltrated the national communion. And the conflict was not merely one of discourses: the authorities had more actual power. The results for the struggle we have been tracing, a struggle over the forms of signification, attribution, interpretive authority, and finally over the discursive construction of the self, are played out in the Surrey sect's apparently trivial shift in heretical strategy. The possible importance of refusing to bear weapons is suggested in Henry Ainsworth's attack on *Terra Pacis*: Ainsworth objected that Niclaes's communist and pacifist utopia placed in question the magistrate's right to the sword and, with it, all magistracy.<sup>79</sup> Likewise, the Surrey Familists' refusal to carry weapons would indicate that no one should, that the magistrate should not have the power of physical force over anyone. The gesture attempts to level a social hierarchy by inverting an accepted signification. But any justice of the peace could read the inverted sign, fix its meaning, and then proceed to wield his unimpaired power. Obligated to resume bearing weapons, the Familists double the possible meanings of this act—it can now mean either submission to or protest against a weaponed prince—and thus render it illegible, meaningless in the sheer surplus of possible meanings. But at the same time we must note that they had no recourse outside of the prevailing system of signs. In attempting first to reverse and then to destabilize a socially fixed signification, they continue to be captured in it, captured by force: their staves “mean” obedience. The “subversives,” to preserve themselves, have spoken their own prohibition; the heretics' subversive sign has been subverted by a textuality of the state.<sup>80</sup>

To sum up: the state responds to the subversive, and contradictory, Familist notion of a divine human identity by generating its contradiction between legally fixed personal identity and the absorption of persons into an official credal program. Familists reciprocate by acts of cooperation that display the state's contradiction and are, to that extent, subversive. However, their cooperative gestures simultaneously specify and dissolve Familist groups and Familist persons: in a sense, identity is named in order to be abandoned, and abandoned in order to be preserved. And, while Familists specify their own separateness by silent dissent from the discursive forms they reproduce, they have nonetheless placed that very separateness within a system that proceeds to affect its definition. Finally, Familists rescue an identity whose outlines have been limned, in part, by the state's antagonistic formulation of it.

But the reverse is also true: as the state works to enforce an anti-Familist strategy, it undermines the coherence of identity and referentiality in orthodox discourse. In the process of insisting on clarity and sincerity, the state has effectively *required* ambiguous speech. Familism—at once highly conciliatory and sharply opposed to the state church, at once distinct from and congruent with it—can serve as an example of the broader effects of a nonseparating confession within the Church of England. It enables us to see that, in their interaction, dissent and

orthodoxy create sharp problems in the definition of identity and the firm establishment of meaning from which neither heretic nor orthodox believer can be immune.

## Notes

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1. Alastair Hamilton's *The Family of Love* (Cambridge, 1981) provides primary and secondary bibliographies that supercede most earlier ones, and I am indebted throughout to his scrupulous account. Scholars particularly interested in English Familism should also consult the bibliography supplied by Joan Deitz Moss, "Variations on a Theme: The Family of Love in Renaissance England," *Renaissance Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (1978): 186–87n.
2. Jan van Dorsten, *The Radical Arts: The First Decade of an Elizabethan Renaissance* (London, 1970), 26–27.
3. J. W. Martin, "Christopher Vitel: An Elizabethan Mechanic Preacher," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 10 (May 1979): 15–22; Hamilton, *The Family of Love*, 119–20.
4. See *ibid.*, 120–28.
5. *Ibid.*, 131.
6. *Ibid.*, 137.
7. See Norman T. Burns, *Christian Mortalism from Tyndale to Milton* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), 58; Julia Ebel, "The Family of Love: Sources of Its History in England," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 30 (1966–67): 336; William C. Johnson, "The Family of Love in Stuart Literature: A Chronology of Name-Crossed Lovers," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 7 (Spring 1977): 95–112; and Joan Deitz Moss, "The Family of Love and English Critics," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 6 (April 1975): 35–52.
8. Hamilton, *The Family of Love*, 137–38; on Everard, see also Burns, *Christian Mortalism*, 51.
9. *Ibid.*, 47–48, 55–57; George H. Sabine, ed., *The Works of Gerrard Winstanley* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1941), 28–29.
10. *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Don M. Wolfe, 8 vols. (New Haven, 1953–82), 1:788; see Christopher Hill, "Milton the Radical," *TLS* 29 (November 1974): 1330; Johnson, "Name-Crossed Lovers," 110.
11. Geoffrey Fillingham Nuttall, *James Nayler: A Fresh Approach* (London, 1954), 7; Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* (New Haven, 1964), 27; Hamilton, *The Family of Love*, 139; Ebel, "Sources," 332; George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia, 1962), 788–89.
12. *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. Austin Dobson, 3 vols. (London, 1906), 3:224; see Ebel, "Sources," 343.
13. Differing definitions of Familism abound: see Burns, *Christian Mortalism*, 50–68; *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. "Henry Nicholas"; Hamilton, *The Family of Love*, 24–39; Lynnewood F. Martin, "The Family of Love in England: Conforming Millen-

- arians," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 3 (October 1972), 102–4; and Moss, "Variations," 193–95.
14. Writing in Low German, Latin, and French, Niclaes composed and published twenty-three books. These include doctrinal tracts, prescriptions for worship and for the government of sects, utopian visions, hymn books, an allegorical play, and a primer for children. Many of these were translated into English by Vittels, probably on Niclaes's authority and under his supervision; Martin, "Christopher Vitel," 20. Since H. de la Fontaine Verwey's article, "The Family of Love," *Quaerendo* 6 (Summer 1976), 219–71, scholars have agreed that these English translations of Niclaes's works were probably printed in Cologne—not, as the *Short-Title Catalogue* records, in Amsterdam; A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475–1640* (London, 1926; hereafter *STC*). There are at least five anonymous or pseudonymous works in English by Familists: anon., *The Power of Love* (London, 1643); Nazarenus Abia, *A Reproofe Spoken and Geeuen-Forth against all False Christians* (1575); Elidad, *A good and fruitful Exhortation vnto the Familie of Love* (1574?); Tobias (Mede-holder mit H. Niclas), *Mirabilia opera Dei: Certaine wonderfull works of God, which hapned to H.N.* (London, 1575); S. W., *A neue balade or songe, of the Lambes feaste* (1574). Ebel speculates that Abia Nazarenus may be a pseudonym for Vittels; "Sources," 335.
  15. The Chaundler-Sterne confession is available complete only among Sir William More's papers in the Folger Library, Losely Ms. L.b.98. This essay depends on a slightly abbreviated version that John Rogers printed in *The Displaying of an horrible sect of grosse and wicked Heretiques* (London, 1578), sig. Ilv–H2v (the present quotation is from sig. H1r–v). This confession is also available, but again in incomplete form, in St. George Hyland's *A Century of Persecution Under Tudor and Stuart Sovereigns from Contemporary Records* (London, 1920), 103–12. Hamilton does not believe that the Surrey group was "Niclaesist" (*The Family of Love*, 117–19), but J. W. Martin argues on the basis of the original manuscript and other relevant papers in the Losely collections that it was; see his "Elizabethan Familists and Other Separatists in the Guilford Area," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 51 (1978): 90–91.
  16. See Carlo Ginzburg, *Il Nicodemismo: Simulazione e dissimulazione religiosa nell'Europa del '500* (Turin, 1970); Moss, "English Critics," 41–43; and "Additional Light on the Family of Love," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 47 (1974): 103–5; Leon Voet, *The Golden Compasses*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 1969–72), 1:29–30.
  17. For examinations of this problem, see Charles H. and Katherine George, *The Protestant Mind of the English Reformation, 1570–1640* (Princeton, N.J., 1961); Basil Hall, "Puritanism: The Problem of Definition," in *Studies in Church History*, ed. G. J. Cuming, Papers read at the second winter and summer meetings of the Ecclesiastical History Society (Cambridge, 1965), 283–96; John F. H. New, *Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of Their Opposition, 1558–1640* (Stanford, Calif., 1964).
  18. Barbara Keifer Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton, N.J., 1979), 14, ix. See also John King, *English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition* (Princeton, N.J., 1982), 6; Darryl J. Gless, "Measure for Measure," *the Law, and the Convent* (Princeton, 1979), xi–xii; Andrew D. Weiner, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism: A Study of Contexts* (Minneapolis, 1978), 5–7.
  19. See Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley, 1967), esp. 14 and part 1, chap. 1, "The Church of England and the English Church," 22–28; and "Towards a Broader Understanding of the Early Dissenting Tradition," in *The Dis-*

- sending *Tradition: Essays for Leland H. Carlson*, ed. C. Robert Cole and Michael E. Moody (Athens, Ohio, 1975), 3–38. *Church papist* is the contemporary term for Catholics who attended Church of England services; their activities are more complex but just as important as those of proper “recusants,” that is, Catholics who refused to “go to church.” See John Bossy, “The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism,” *Past and Present* 21 (1962): 39–59, esp. 42–43; and *The English Catholic Community, 1570–1850* (New York, 1976), 37–39, 44, 121–25.
20. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980), esp. chap. 2, “The Word of God in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” pp. 74–114, exemplifies such an inquiry.
  21. Terry Eagleton, “Text, Ideology, Realism,” in *Literature and Society*, ed. Edward W. Said, Selected Papers from the English Institute, n.s. 3 (Baltimore, 1978), 152.
  22. *Ibid.*, 157.
  23. For a consideration of the consequences for the heretics in particular, see my essay, “Heretical Discourse: The Politics of Familist Language,” in Richard C. Trexler, ed., *Persons in Groups: Social Behavior as Identity Formation in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, Papers of the Sixteenth Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies (Binghamton, N.Y., 1985).
  24. Ebel, “Sources,” 331n.
  25. Moss, “Variations,” 193.
  26. Rogers, *The Displaying*, sig. C3v–C4v. The *OED* glosses *geyson* as a variant of *geason*: “scantly produced; rare, scarce, uncommon.”
  27. Elizabeth I, proclamation 652, “Ordering the Prosecution of the Family of Love,” in *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, 3 vols. (New Haven, 1969), 2:474–75.
  28. “The confession of Leonard Romsey deliuered vnto me Thomas Barwicke minister with his owne hand,” PRO, SP 12 cxxxiii, 55; reprinted in Moss, “Variations,” 190–91. See Moss’s cogent commentary on these difficulties in *ibid.*, 191–95.
  29. [Hendrick Niclaes], *Evangelium Regni: a joyfull message from the kingdom published by the holie Spirit of the Love of Jesu Christ, and sent-fourth unto all Nations of People, which loue the Trueth in Iesu Christ. Set-fourth by HN, and by him perused a-new and more-distinctlie declared* (Cologne?, 1575?).
  30. Moss, “Variations,” 193–94.
  31. Niclaes, *Evangelium Regni*, sig. 55v, 81v–82r; Burns, *Christian Mortalism*, 58–66.
  32. [Hendrick Niclaes], *Proverbia HN. The Prouerbes of HN. Which hee in the Dayes of his Olde-Age, hath set-fourth as Similitudes and mystical Sayings* (Cologne?, 1575?), 6v–7r.
  33. Hamilton, *The Family of Love*, 6–9.
  34. *Ibid.*, 10–12.
  35. Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, trans. Olive Wyon, 2 vols. (London, 1976), 2:743–47.
  36. Rogers, *The Displaying*, sig. H2v, 15r.
  37. Hamilton, *The Family of Love*, 56–59.
  38. [Hendrick Niclaes], *Terra Pacis. A true testification of the spirituall Lande of Peace, which is the spirituall Lande of Promise, and the holy Citee of Peace or the heauenly Ierusalem: and of the holy and spirituall People that dwel therein: as also of the Walking in the Spirit, which leadeth therunto. Set-fourth by H.N.: and by Him newly perused and more-playnly declared* (Cologne, 1575?), 41r–51r.
  39. Moss, “The Family of Love,” 35–51. Verwey dismantles another rumor of Niclaes’s profligacy in “The Family of Love,” 260.
  40. Johnson, “Name-Crossed Lovers,” 97.

41. Niclaes, *Terra Pacis*, 54v–55r. The ellipsis marks a new paragraph, not an omission.
42. [Hendrick Niclaes], *The Prophetie [sic] of the Spirit of Loue Set-fourth by HN: and by him perused a-new, and more distinctlie declared* (Cologne, 1574), 4v; emphasis mine.
43. Niclaes, *Evangelium Regni*, 32v.
44. Hamilton, *The Family of Love*, 83–84, 87–89.
45. See, for instance, [Hendrick Niclaes], *An Epistle sent unto two daughters of Warwick from H.N. The oldest father of the Familie of Love. With a refutation of the errors that are therein; by H.A[insworth]* (Amsterdam, 1608), 47.
46. *Ibid.*, 61.
47. Niclaes, *Proverbia*, 7v.
48. Niclaes, *Prophetie*, 13r.
49. Niclaes makes the point allegorically in *Terra Pacis*: pilgrims seeking the city “Gods vnderstanding” can mistakenly take the path “Knowledge-of-good-and-euell” and wind up in a Babylon of scholars. The intellectual pride and academic hierarchies of that alarmingly familiar destination are opposed to the virtuous renunciation of pilgrims who “stand submitted vnder the Obedience of the Love”, 29v–34v, 48r. Here, as elsewhere, Niclaes uses “the Loue” as a synonym for Familist doctrine.
50. Niclaes, *Proverbia*, 43r–v.
51. Rogers, *The Displaying*, sig. 15v.
52. Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1958), studies this strategy in depth.
53. See STC and Hamilton’s bibliography, *The Family of Love*, 170.
54. *Ibid.*, 55, quoting from Tobias, *Mirabilia opera Dei*, 91.
55. Niclaes, *Proverbia*, 32v.
56. *Ibid.*, 32r.
57. Niclaes, *Terra Pacis*, 72r.
58. Niclaes, *Proverbia*, 22v.
59. Rogers, *The Displaying*, sig. H2r.
60. *The Basilikon Doron of James VI*, ed. James Craigie (Edinburgh, 1944), 15–16.
61. *A Supplication of the Family of Loue (said to be presented in the Kings royall hands, known to be dispersed among his loyall Subiectes) for grace and fauour. Examined, and found to be derogatorie in an hie degree, vnto the glorie of God, the honour of our King, and the Religion in this Realme both soundly professed & firmly established* (Cambridge, 1606), 56.
62. “Last of all they haue Prophecies, that all Maiesties, Dominions, Powers, and governments whatsoeuer, shall, and make prayers, that they may, submit themselues vnto the seruice of the Loue (euen as the Puritanes would have kings to submit their scepters, to throw downe their crownes before the Church, yea and to lick vp the dust of the feet of the Church, and yielde obedience vnto the presbiterie, and also that themselues, as Kings, and onely Kings shall euerlastingly liue and raigne yea and do raigne vpon the earth)”; *A Supplication*, 19.
63. Folger Library, Losely Ms. L.b.99, reprinted in J. W. Martin, “Elizabethan Familists,” 92–93.
64. *Ibid.*, 93.
65. Michel Foucault, “What Is an Author?,” in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. Josué V. Harari (Ithaca, N.Y., 1979), 148.
66. Moss, “Variations,” 190.
67. *The Confession and declaration of R. Sharpe, and other of that secte, tearmed the Famelie of Loue, at Pawles Crosse in London the xij of Iune. An. 1575* (London, 1575).
68. See, for example, William Wilkinson, *A Confutation of Certaine Articles Delivered by HN unto the Familie of Love* (London, 1579), 61r–63v.
69. Elizabeth I, “Ordering the Prosecution,” 474–75.



70. Moss states that it is not possible to find actual recommendations of lying in Nicolaes's works, "Additional Light," 105; see also Moss, "English Critics," 43. She cites Nicolaes's *Exhortatio I* (Cologne, c. 1574), 20v–21r, to show that he actually forbids it: "Let not lies or falsehood be witnessed or spoken of you, but love the trueth and righteousness with all your heart." But it is clear that English Familists lied and encouraged each other to lie. Familist Nicodemism provides a useful gloss on this disagreement between sixteenth- and twentieth-century interpreters of Nicolaes. Though he would not have called it lying, Nicolaes *did* endorse a policy of simulation, of obeying the magistrate in all things, even if he or she demanded participation in an objectionable ritual or a recantation of Familism itself. This policy probably did make Familism attractive to some who lacked religious convictions of their own or who were willing to serve the tumultuous times. But Verwey, Voet, and van Dorsten have shown that Familist simulation derives from the positive spiritualist doctrine of divine harmony, according to which all churches, rites, and nations and peoples are united in God and divided only in the illusions of this world; H. de la Fontaine Verwey, "Trois hérésiarches dans les Pays-Bas du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et renaissance* 16 (1954): 312–30; Voet, *Golden Compasses*, 1:25–30; van Dorsten, *Radical Arts*, passim; see also Hamilton, *The Family of Love*, 67–70, 72–73, on the "politiques." Only with these complications in mind can we run the risk of repeating anti-Familist polemics by calling utterances like those described in the next paragraph "lies."
71. Wilkinson, *A Confutation*, 61v.
72. Moss, "Variations," 191.
73. Rogers, *The Displaying*, sig. H2v.
74. "The confession of sele ely and mathew / beinge of the famely of Love. . .," British Library, Harley Ms. 537 f. 110, reprinted in James Hitchcock, "A Confession of the Family of Love, 1580," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 43 (1970): 85–86. Parenthesized material is supplied by Hitchcock.
75. John Knewstubb, *A Confutation of monstrous and horrible heresies, taught by H.N. and embraced of a number, who call themselves the Familie of Loue* (London, 1597), 55v.
76. *Ibid.*, 35v. The square brackets are Knewstubb's.
77. Rogers, *The Displaying*, sig. H2r.
78. *Ibid.*, sig. I6v–17r.
79. Nicolaes, *An Epistle*, 51–54 (Ainsworth's commentary); *Terra Pacis*, 14r, 41r–56.
80. For another analysis of equivocation and the political contradictions it entails, see Steven Mullaney, "Lying Like Truth: Riddle, Representation and Treason in Renaissance England," *ELH* 47 (1980): 32–47.



FIGURE 1. Christopher Saxton's map of Somerset, 1579. The royal arms are displayed under the canopy at the top of the sheet, Thomas Seckford's arms in the lower right-hand corner, and Saxton's name on the banner behind the compass in the lower left-hand corner. This banner was lacking on the early sheets. British Library.

## The Land Speaks: Cartography, Chorography, and Subversion in Renaissance England

IN 1579, WHILE EDMUND SPENSER, Philip Sidney, and their Areopagitan friends were struggling to have, as Spenser put it, "the kingdom of our own language," Englishmen made another, more immediately successful conquest. For the first time they took effective visual and conceptual possession of the physical kingdom in which they lived. And they did it without much struggle. Their accomplishment was enabled by a book published that year, one of the most significant of the many extraordinarily significant books to come from English presses in the last quarter of the sixteenth century: Christopher Saxton's great collection of county maps. There had, of course, been earlier maps of Britain.<sup>1</sup> But never before had England and Wales—or, for that matter, any country—been seen in such detail or with such accuracy. Here in a single volume were thirty-five maps, a general map followed by thirty-four maps of individual counties or groups of counties, representing the little world of Elizabeth's kingdom. The book's effect was enormous. For over two hundred years—until the Ordinance Survey of 1794—nearly every printed map of England and Wales derived from Saxton.

But if the effect of Saxton's maps was large and lasting, not everyone felt it in the same way. Maps were of more immediate use to those with property and power than to those without. It is thus perhaps not surprising that this, the first detailed survey of England and Wales, was undertaken at the behest of the queen's government, for the satisfaction of its particular requirements, and, not incidentally, as an expression of its power. Power and its representation were no less deeply involved in the conquests of Renaissance cartography than in the various campaigns, Spenser's among them, to master and reform the European vernaculars—and the historical ironies generated by that involvement were as intense.

In the case of Saxton's atlas, the very success of the project produced consequences that had not been foreseen and that were certainly not desired by the royal authority that sponsored it. A bibliographic accident provides a preliminary intimation of this irony. Bound with one of the British Library copies of Saxton is a map, printed in the eighteenth century from plates engraved in 1644, which bears the following legend: "This map was reduced from the county maps of Mr. Saxton by order of Oliver Cromwell for the use of his armies."<sup>2</sup> The truth is less

dramatic. The map did derive from Saxton's, but it was ordered not by Cromwell but merely by a London printseller of parliamentary leaning. Armies on both sides of the Civil Wars used it.<sup>3</sup> But the real historical irony is still deeper. If Saxton's maps were never the exclusive instruments of the army that overthrew the monarchy which had first sponsored them, they did have their part in the long, slow movement of thought and action that brought the king's enemies to the field.<sup>4</sup> Only the early phase of that story concerns me here—the production, use, and ideological significance of Saxton's maps and the subsequent development, particularly in the generation that came of age just as those maps were first appearing, of a cartographically and chorographically shaped consciousness of national power. Without maps, as J. R. Hale has remarked, "a man could not visualize the country to which he belonged."<sup>5</sup> But what happened when he could visualize it, when the very possibility of doing so was still fresh and new?

### Maps and the Signs of Authority

We speak of these maps as Saxton's. In this we are at one with our eighteenth-century legend writer, with seventeenth-century advertisements, catalogues, and handbooks, indeed with everyone who has ever referred to the maps all the way back to the last years of the sixteenth century, when Abraham Ortelius and John Norden, both mapmakers themselves, each acknowledged the prior accomplishment of Saxton. Since then no name but Saxton's has been associated with "his" maps. But even this unanimity has its limits. The earliest allusions put the matter differently. Raphael Holinshed in the first volume of his *Chronicles* (1577) and William Harrison in his *Description of Britain*, published with Holinshed, both refer, in virtually identical language, to "the great charges and notable enterprise of that worthy gentleman, Master Thomas Seckford, in procuring the charts of the several provinces of this realm to be set forth," and both go on to hope "that in time he will delineate this whole island so perfectly as shall be comparable or beyond any delineation heretofore made of any other region."<sup>6</sup>

Who was Thomas Seckford? And why should we identify *his* maps with Saxton's? A Privy Council pass of 11 March 1576 makes the connection inevitable. "A placard to [Christopher] Saxton, servant to Master Seckford, Master of the Requests, to be assisted in all places where he shall come for the view of meet places to describe certain counties in cartes."<sup>7</sup> Saxton was employed by Seckford. But Holinshed and Harrison agree in associating the maps with the master, not with the man, and William Camden, in the only other published reference before Ortelius' of 1595, only partially accommodates our very different understanding. "England," he writes in the preface to the first edition of his *Britannia* (1586), "has been most accurately and laudably described in maps by the worthy gentleman Thomas Seckford, Master of Requests to the Queen's Majesty, at his costs and by the labors of the excellent chorographer Christopher Saxton."<sup>8</sup> Though Camden

recognizes Saxton's labor, he has Seckford doing the describing, just as Holinshed and Harrison had him delineating. The syntax of all three gives chief responsibility and chief credit to the purchaser of the labor rather than to the laborer himself, whose describing and delineating hand is called by Seckford's name.

Nor does the question of appropriate attribution stop here. If we read to the end of that Privy Council pass, we will discover a third candidate: "being thereunto appointed by her Majesty's bill under her signet." Some six other official documents—Saxton's original commission; another Privy Council letter of introduction; grants of land, of reversion of office, copyright privilege, and arms—all tell the same story.<sup>9</sup> Though the immediate costs of Saxton's survey may have been borne by Thomas Seckford (who in 1579 was rewarded by advancement to the profitable post of surveyor of the Court of Wards and Liveries), the prime movers were the queen and her government.

What are we to conclude from this evidence? Should we adopt the practice that has governed our naming of the King James Bible and call this the Queen Elizabeth Atlas? Or are Holinshed and Harrison closer to the mark in thinking the book Seckford's? Or should we stay (as we undoubtedly will) with Saxton? These are not questions of who did what. Let us accept for the moment that the queen (or, more likely, her Privy Council) ordered the maps, that Seckford supplied the surveyor and paid his costs, that Saxton traveled, surveyed, and drew. Agreement about such matters does not, as we are beginning to see, solve the deeper problem of attribution—nor can that problem be solved by a study of the maps themselves, for they invite and confirm all three claims (fig. 1). Every sheet of the 1579 atlas displays the royal arms, Seckford's arms, and the inscription "Christophorus Saxton descripsit." Here the whole system—from royal authority, through gentry patronage, to commoner craftsmanship—is set forth.

But when we look closely at the separate sheets, not in their final form but as they were first printed from 1574 to 1578, the stasis of a fully articulated system dissolves into story—a story very like the one that emerged from our study of the early allusions. Only Seckford's arms appear on all thirty-four sheets. The royal insignia make a tardy entry, crowded into a narrow margin as an apparent afterthought, on the second map to be printed, but from then on they are never absent. For Saxton's name the wait is much longer—three full years, twenty-five sheets into the series.<sup>10</sup> Obviously, to the maps' first producers the identity of the surveyor was the least essential bit of information. Of far greater significance were the patron and the monarch. But in the subsequent history of the survey Saxton gets his revenge. Later printings, whether from the original plates or from reengravings, quickly drop Seckford's arms. The royal arms stay on a little longer, though changed after 1603 from Elizabeth's to James's, but then they too vanish. By the mid-seventeenth century, when any name or identifying mark appears other than that of the new engraver or printseller, it is Saxton's. Seckford's maps and the queen's have become his.

In these small changes we can, I think, discern the trace of a momentous transfer of cultural authority from the patron and the royal system of government of which patronage was an integral part to the individual maker. Our sense, however strongly qualified it may sometimes be by a recognition of other sources of validation, that the ultimate legitimacy and authority of an artifact derive from the skill and integrity of the individual artificer is not, we need constantly to remind ourselves, merely a matter of fact. As I have already suggested, even when we know all the relevant facts, the real question of authority remains. And that is always a question that will be answered in terms governed by our ideological commitments, commitments so pervasive that we are hardly aware of them. Only the discovery that they have not been universally shared, that there was a time when buyers were more interested in knowing that maps were produced under the patronage of Thomas Seckford than that they were drawn by Christopher Saxton, can make us see our very different interest for the historically contingent thing that it is.<sup>11</sup>

In displaying the royal arms the maps do not, however, speak only of the source of their authority—that is, of the power that through the system of patronage brought them into existence—but also of the relation of that power to the land they depict. And that second meaning would for the queen and for her leading councilors undoubtedly have been the more important. Not only are these the queen's maps; this is the queen's land, her kingdom. Mere heraldic labeling has its part here. The royal and imperial arms that appear on a few (very few, as it happens) of the maps in Ortelius' *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570)—the great model for Saxton's atlas—seem to function this way. To those who can read them, they say "England" or "France" or "Holy Roman Empire." But the prominence of this feature in Saxton's atlas, its conspicuous inclusion on every sheet, suggests that something more is being said. These maps proclaim royal sovereignty over the kingdom as a whole and over each of its provinces. As we turn the pages, we are invited to remember that Cornwall is the queen's, Hampshire the queen's, Dorset the queen's, and so on county by county. And lest one miss the point, the frontispiece bears no title, no reference to either Seckford or Saxton, but only an engraving of the queen enthroned, surmounted by her arms and an emblem of her rule, flanked by figures of cosmography and geography, underscored by verses celebrating the accomplishments of her benign reign (fig. 2). Clearly a significant contribution to the "cult of Elizabeth," Saxton's atlas provides a deliberate and insistent statement of royalist claims—a statement that we can perhaps see "read" and repeated in the famous Ditchley portrait where Queen Elizabeth towers over an England drawn after the Saxton model (fig. 3).

FIGURE 2 (*opposite*). Saxton's frontispiece, 1579. British Library.



These two objects, Saxton's atlas and the Ditchley portrait, so similar in their apparent political allegiance, nevertheless differ sharply in their effect. Where the portrait unambiguously enforces the royal cult, the atlas, however unintentionally, undermines it. The Ditchley portrait provides only one possible reading of Saxton, and not the more frequent or persistent one. Far closer to what must have been the usual reading is the Quartermaster's Map of 1644—the reengraving of Saxton that the eighteenth century attributed to the orders of Cromwell. It retains the geographical information supplied by Saxton, but clears away everything else. After all, by putting the queen *on* the map the Ditchley artist had hidden what most people bought an atlas to see—a representation of the land itself.

The needs of cartographic representation are such that, for it to be successful, information concerning such matters as royal patronage or sovereignty must be pushed to the side. While rivers and woods, towns and castles, even political boundaries appear on maps as features intrinsic to the land, explicit symbols of royal control are necessarily made to look marginal, merely decorative, and thus ultimately dispensable. There is really no way to overcome this built-in bias. The harder the mapmaker tries, the larger and more elaborate he makes the signs of sovereignty, the more out of place they seem. Reduced in size and importance, they pass easily enough as mere labels, identifying marks like the place names written elsewhere on the sheet. But expanded, as Saxton often expands them, they construct around themselves a representational space separate from and foreign to the space supposed by the map itself. They exist on another plane, in another dimension.

Our inclination looking at maps like the Quartermaster's might be to think that, though cartographic representations are important instruments of power, vital tools in the conduct of politics, diplomacy, and war, they are themselves ideologically neutral. They serve the purposes of their user, whatever side he may be on. They do not themselves represent or shape those purposes. But much evidence suggests that in the decades following the publication of Saxton's atlas, when the experience of accurate maps was still unfamiliar, this was not so. The cartographic representation of England did have an ideological effect. It strengthened the sense of both local and national identity at the expense of an identity based on dynastic loyalty. "Delight[ing] to look on maps," "beautify[ing] their halls, parlors, chambers, galleries, studies, or libraries" with them, reproducing them in tapestries, book illustrations, paintings, and playing cards, alluding to them metaphorically in poems, even bringing them on stage, as Shakespeare does in *1 Henry IV* and in *King Lear*, sixteenth-century Englishmen exposed themselves to the pervasive influence of an image scarcely less potent and considerably more durable than that of Elizabeth herself.<sup>12</sup> Maps let them see in a way never before possible the country—both county and nation—to which they belonged and at the same time showed royal authority—or at least its insignia—to be a merely ornamental adjunct to that country. Maps thus opened a conceptual gap between the land and its ruler, a gap that would eventually span battlefields.

The maps that follow Saxton's contain no overtly antimonarchical signs. It would be more than surprising if they did. But they do show—particularly those issued in the decade after James's accession to the English throne—a diminution of the place accorded the insignia of royal power and a corresponding increase in the attention paid to the land itself. Still close to Saxton are the county maps published by John Norden in his descriptions of Middlesex (1594) and Hertfordshire (1598). Norden gives the royal arms not only a place on his maps but also a full quarto page of each of his books.<sup>13</sup> But in 1604 those arms fail to appear on





**FIGURE 3.** The Ditchley portrait of Queen Elizabeth, attributed to Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger [1592?]. National Portrait Gallery, London.



his manuscript map of Cornwall, and they occur on only eleven of the fifty-six county maps added to Camden's *Britannia* in the edition of 1607. This lack in Camden is all the more remarkable in that the originals from which his maps were drawn do, in every case that can be checked, bear the royal arms (fig. 4). Apparently this feature, so prominent in Saxton's atlas, no longer mattered much to either Norden or Camden. John Speed may have cared a little more. Thirty-six of the forty-two maps of the English counties in his *Theater of the Empire of Great Britain* (1611) still display those arms, but in doing so they inflict another sort of displacement. In Speed the royal arms are usually much reduced in scale and always joined by a whole array of other features—arms of local gentry, colleges, or guilds; plans of cities and castles; scenes of battle; pictures of buildings, monuments, and local heroes—features that direct attention away from the king and his claims and toward the country and its (fig. 5). And what Speed does on his maps, he, Norden, and Camden all do far more extensively in the texts that accompany their maps, for their books are not merely atlases, as Saxton's is, but full-scale chorographic descriptions of the land and people of Britain. And such description, at least as they practiced it, left little place for the representation of royal power. The choice they made, the choice of what to study and describe, was, however little sense they may have had of its broader implications, a choice of one system of authority, one source of legitimacy, over another.



FIGURE 4 (*opposite*). William Camden's map of Somerset, 1607. A close copy of Saxton's map, with the royal arms replaced by an ornamental cartouche. Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

FIGURE 5 (*above*). John Speed's map of Somerset, 1611. Another copy of Saxton, this one with a map of Bath filling the upper left-hand corner. The Stuart arms appear in the upper center and the arms of local nobility in the lower left-hand corner. Huntington Library.

Nowhere is that choice more evident than in the eighteen maps that in 1612 illustrated the first installment of Michael Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* (fig. 6). Here the shift in attention and ideological commitment initiated by Saxton's atlas achieved its iconographic culmination. From these maps all dynastic insignia are banished. Instead of elaborate coats of arms, we find, as Drayton puts it, "every mountain, forest, river, and valley, expressing in their sundry postures their loves, delights, and natural situations."<sup>14</sup> The map, already a lively image in Saxton, Norden, and Speed, here comes alive in a still more immediate way. Drayton's Britain is "peopled" by its natural and man-made landmarks. Its streams are nymphs; its hills, shepherds; its differing regions, rival choirs. Its only crowns are worn by towns and natural sites. And its scepter, as shown on Drayton's frontispiece, is held by



FIGURE 6. Michael Drayton's map of Cornwall and Devon from *Poly-Olbion* (London, 1612). British Library.

the land as a whole, by an allegorical personification of Great Britain, a goddess-like woman dressed in a map (fig. 7). The imagery of authority, the crowns and the scepter, are still monarchical. The visual imagination knew no other way to represent power. But the monarch is now the land, the land as Saxton and his successors had been making it known.

Drayton's remarkable frontispiece is itself as much an iconographic culmination as the maps it introduces. Already Camden had moved the map of Britain to the front of his book, and he had shown it surmounted by an allegorical personification of Britannia (fig. 8). Drayton combines the two images, making map and allegorical representation one. But he does more than that. He also seats his figure in a position strongly reminiscent of that assumed by Queen Elizabeth on Saxton's frontispiece, an image that was itself already an adaptation of the familiar icon of the Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven. As the cult of Elizabeth had replaced the cult of the Virgin, so the cult of Britain now assumes power in its

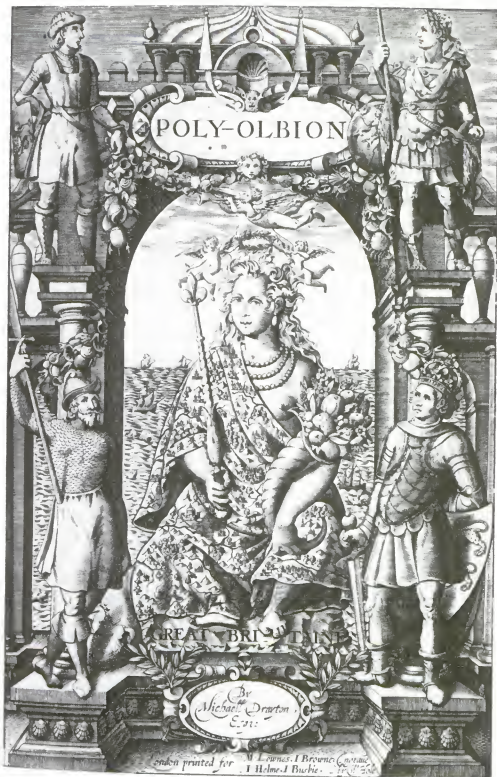


FIGURE 7. Frontispiece to Drayton's *Poly-Olbion*, 1612.  
Huntington Library.





turn. From universal Christendom, to dynastic state, to land-centered nation—this is the historic sequence suggested by this succession of images. And the fact that the dynastic claim was being pressed more unequivocally than ever before just as Drayton's book appeared makes its imagery all the more significant. That imagery not only realizes the implications of much that had gone before, making manifest the latent meaning of books like Saxton's. It does so in the face of an absolutist claim to ideological monopoly that would have denied the very existence of a rival source of authority to which it might legitimately refer. Drayton quite simply pushes such claims to the side. Off at the edge of the frontispiece, on columns flanking the sceptered figure of Britain, he places those princes that



FIGURE 8 (left). Frontispiece to Camden's *Britannia* (London, 1607). British Library.

FIGURE 9 (right). Title page from Speed's *Theater of the Empire of Great Britain* (London, 1611). Huntington Library.

"Time hath seen / Ambitious of her": "Aeneas nephew, Brut," "Laureate Caesar," the Saxon Hengist, and finally the Norman William. That, Drayton seems to suggest, is where such ambitions belong—off to the side. Marginality is the best they can hope to achieve.

Drayton's frontispiece supplies the answer to a question generated by the intense study of British antiquity that had been going on for the preceding half century. Put most simply: what is British history the history of? What is the element of continuity in that history? What holds it together? The more the antiquaries learned, the less easily they could say that their histories told the story of a single British people or of a single governing dynasty stretching back to Brut

and his Trojan warriors. As the imagery of both Drayton's frontispiece and the frontispiece of Speed's *Theater* (fig. 9) suggests, quite different peoples have occupied and ruled Great Britain. Only someone as blindly devoted to the myth of historical identity as Sir Edward Coke could persist in tracing English institutions back to time immemorial.<sup>15</sup> More characteristic of the understanding being forced on Englishmen by the accumulated results of their own historical investigations was Samuel Daniel's remark that the Saxon invasion, "concurr[ing] with the general mutation of other states of the world" attendant on the dissolution of the Roman Empire, marked an absolute break in the institutional history of Britain.<sup>16</sup> And he is only a little less insistent on the break caused by the Norman invasion, from which he begins the main line of his narrative. What Daniel says, Speed's frontispiece, with its Britain, Roman, Saxon, Dane, and Norman, shows.

Drayton shows it too, but he shows something else as well. In the center of this image of historical discontinuity, he places that new figure inspired by the work of the cartographers and chorographers, the figure of the land itself. While his four monarchs warily eye one another or their intended prey, this new figure gazes serenely out, a confident source of identity and continuity. Edgy and mutually destructive male rivalry is theirs; power and plenty remain always with her. Where they are mere artifacts of stone, "trophies," as Drayton calls them, raised to adorn her triumphal arch, she, holding the fruits of her bounteous womb in the position traditionally reserved for the Madonna's divine child, is a living embodiment of nature.<sup>17</sup> So satisfying is this image, so whole and so right, that it makes any suggestion of underlying ideological struggle seem forced. But that is precisely its strength. Drayton's frontispiece presents the results of a conceptual revolution as though nothing had happened at all.

One hears much of the Renaissance discovery of the self and much too of the Elizabethan discovery of England.<sup>18</sup> In the emergence of Saxton as sole "author" of his survey and of the land he depicts as a figure of authority, these maps and frontispieces give evidence of both discoveries. But that evidence suggests, I think, something further, something more complex and more interesting. Not only does the emergence of the land parallel the emergence of the individual authorial self, the one enforces and perhaps depends on the other. Nationalism and individualism, to use the dangerously convenient general terms for these two tendencies, are deeply implicated in one another. That mutual implication begins with the sharing of a common term of difference. Each comes into being in dialectical opposition to royal absolutism—an absolutism that in its most extreme form would claim both parts, would claim to be both that which is represented (the land is the body of the king) and that which does the representing (these are the king's maps, produced by the exercise of his power). In this view all words and all images are the king's.<sup>19</sup> Saxton's intended meaning is not far from this, and many passages in Elizabethan and Jacobean literature, particularly in courtly works like Spenser's *Faerie Queene* or Jonson's masques, come still closer. The cho-



rographies that follow Saxton never explicitly reject this royalist notion. But they nevertheless edge toward a very different sense—a sense of words and images caught in a complex and mutually self-constituting exchange between individual authors and the land they represent. Authority in this emerging system is not centered but dispersed. Land and self are semi-independent functions of one another. Neither has the absolute autonomy claimed by the king, but neither quite collapses into the other. As our look at the maps and frontispieces has suggested, the self gives the dumb and inanimate land voice and life, in exchange for which the land grants the self an impersonal and historically transcendent authority. In this mysterious and thoroughly mystified relationship—after all, dirt and water cannot really speak and authority can never escape history—authors are enabled by the authority they confer on the land they describe. And royal power is disabled by both.

Or so one might conclude from a reading of these images. The same kind of analysis could, however, have led to a quite different conclusion. James based his claim to the English throne on conquest—the conquest of his Norman ancestor. In Drayton's array of conquering monarchs, the king would have seen that claim illustrated. Feminized, the land becomes a fitting object for male desire and appropriation. Furthermore, the title given that female personification, "Great Britain," explicitly supports a particular and highly controversial element in James's political program, his attempt to unite the kingdoms of England and Scotland as the Empire of Great Britain. Looked at this way, the potentially antimonarchical image becomes a specifically pro-Jacobean one. Both readings are possible. Both may in some vague way have been intended. But good evidence suggests that among those most involved in the production and reception of these maps and chorographic descriptions a reading that gave value to the land at the expense of the monarch came to dominate. Forms find their historical meaning not in some abstract configuration of lines and language but rather in the experience of particular communities. What was the experience of the men who, following Saxton, allowed images of the sort we have been regarding to occupy an important place in the shaping of their behavior and their consciousness? Who supported the production of these images? And who benefited from them?

### From Court to Country

In 1598, nineteen years after the publication of Saxton's atlas, John Norden presented a copy of his description of Hertfordshire, the second part of his *Speculum Britanniae*, to Queen Elizabeth. Onto the flyleaf of the printed book he wrote by hand the following letter:

To the gracious consideration of the Queen's most excellent Majesty:

Right gracious Sovereign, I cannot but humbly exhibit these my simple endeavors unto your Highness' most princely consideration.

I was drawn unto them by honorable councilors and warranted by your royal favor.

I was promised sufficient allowance and in hope thereof only I proceeded. And by attendance on the cause and by travail in the business, I have spent above a thousand marks and five years' time.

By which, being dangerously indebted, much grieved, and my family distressed, I have no other refuge but to fly unto your Majesty's never failing bounty for relief.

The right honorable Lord Treasurer hath thrice signified his good conceit of the work and of my deservings under his hand unto your Majesty. Only your Majesty's princely favor is my hope, without which I myself most miserably perish, my family in penury and the work unperformed, which, being effected, shall be profitable and a glory to this your most admired Empire.

I endeavor to do your Majesty service. I pray for your Highness unfeignedly. Quid ego miser ultra.

Your Majesty's most loyal distressed subject.

J. Norden<sup>20</sup>

Norden had been employed, or so he claimed two years earlier in the *Preparative to his Speculum Britanniae*, "after the most painful and praiseworthy labors of Master Christopher Saxton, in the redescription of England" (sig. A5). But clearly the system of patronage that had so effectively supported Saxton was not supporting him. The financial assistance he had been promised (or thought he had been promised) had not been forthcoming, and his project was foundering badly. Though by 1598 Norden had surveyed at least five other counties, Hertfordshire was only the second to be printed, and it, despite renewed appeals to King James and his ministers, was to be the last.<sup>21</sup>

Norden had tested the system. He had come to the government with a project that he thought (and that the queen's leading councilor seems to have thought) of legitimate interest to it. But that interest proved evanescent. Though the many surviving documents provide no sure evidence that the royal government actively disapproved of Norden's redescription, they also provide no evidence of active approval—at least not after the early nineties. Expectations aroused by Saxton's success were shown to be misplaced. If, as Norden fondly believed and tirelessly repeated, the redescription of Britain fulfilled a duty he felt toward his country, then duty to country and duty to king no longer quite coincided. Were the work of representing Britain to go on at all, it would have to be under other auspices and with other support.

That it did go on, and go on vigorously, is proven by the continuing augmentation, republication, and finally translation of Camden's *Britannia*; by the publication of Speed's *Theater* and Drayton's *Poly-Olbion*; and by the extensive work of such local chorographers as Richard Carew, John Stow, George Owen, Tristram Risdon, Thomas Habington, and William Burton. Here—particularly in Camden's book and in Speed's, each of which printed a number of Norden's maps—the *Speculum Britanniae* came closer to realization than it ever had in Norden's own publications. But in doing so, it took a very different road than the one of

official patronage marked out by Saxton and followed, so unhappily, by Norden. In place of the royal government, a dispersed network of individuals and communities—a schoolmaster, a London tradesman, a number of lawyers and country gentlemen working at their own expense, courtiers supplying patronage unrelated to official court purposes, printers responding to commercial opportunity—ensured the continued production of chorography.

This new social figuration depended on and enabled the twin emergence we have already noticed—the emergence of the author and the land, of the self and the nation. In this regard, Camden can be seen as exemplary. Where Saxton only becomes the author of his atlas retrospectively, Camden is an author from the beginning. *Britannia* is his book. Its authority is his. The kind of accusation that was leveled at Camden, that he borrowed too heavily from John Leland's notes and with too little acknowledgment, would have made no sense directed at Saxton, not because he did or did not rely on the work of others, but because he makes no claim to a specifically individual authority. But, likewise, the doubts we did have about the "true" authorship of the atlas—Saxton, Seckford, or the queen?—have no counterpart with regard to *Britannia*, unless, of course, we wish to credit Ortelius with the original book and the English chorographical community for its gradual transformation into the *Britain* that was finally translated in 1610. Camden's individual authority was supported not by the system of royal patronage but by two communities—first an international one, then an English one—communities whose interest it was to advance the claims of their most productive members.

Against Norden's plaintive letter to the queen in which the frustrations of the court-centered system speak so painfully, we may set a passage from a letter Camden wrote late in his life to a fellow antiquary.

I know not who may justly say that I was ambitious, who contented myself in Westminster School when I writ my *Britannia* and eleven years afterward, who refused a Mastership of Requests offered and then had the place of King of Arms without any suit cast upon me. I did never set sail after present preferments or desired to soar higher by others. I never made suit to any man, no, not to his Majesty, but for a matter of course incident to my place, neither (God be praised) I needed, having gathered a contented sufficiency by my long labors in the school.<sup>22</sup>

Camden defines ambition exclusively in terms of the court system. For him ambition equals desire for promotion at court. But surely this letter and Camden's career as a whole are shaped by what we would call ambition—indeed, by an ambition of a far more audacious sort, the ambition to "soar higher" *without* the aid of others. "I . . . gathered a contented sufficiency by *my* long labors," Camden proudly insists; "*I* writ *my Britannia*." What enables such ambition, what justifies Camden in denying it the very name of ambition, is his ardent "natural affection" for his country—that and membership in a community that accepted the over-riding claims of such affection. If, as Kevin Sharpe has remarked, Camden "kept

aloof from politics after having obtained the post of Clarenceux King at Arms . . . and was to show dangerous indifference to James I's wishes when he wrote his history of Elizabeth's reign," it was because he had another, independent source of pride and authority, one untainted by courtly ambition.<sup>23</sup>

Camden's "dangerous indifference" was, however, more than matched by the crown's passive neglect and eventual open disapproval of the attempts made by this new social figuration to give itself permanent institutional form. In 1586, the year of the publication of *Britannia*, Camden and a group of friends founded a Society of Antiquaries, which came to number among its members most of the leading English chorographers.<sup>24</sup> For the next decade and a half this society met regularly as a private organization, independent of any official authority, to read papers on English institutions, customs, and topography. But when in about 1602 three of its members presented a petition to Queen Elizabeth requesting formal recognition and establishment, they had no success.<sup>25</sup> And James, to whom they renewed their request, was still less sympathetic. Though the society had explicitly resolved not to "meddle with matters of state, nor of religion," the king demanded that it abandon even its private meetings.<sup>26</sup>

The antiquaries were all royalists—some, like John Speed, rabidly so. None had any idea of altering the established form of government or even of diminishing the authority of the king. Yet their activities were seen as threatening. As I have been arguing, this perception was fundamentally correct. From a Norden, still fully caught up in the system of court patronage, there was little to fear. His projects could be frustrated, his energies easily diverted. But from a Camden, though the formal society he founded could be turned off with "a little dislike," there *was* something to fear. The individual autonomy of Camden himself, the communal autonomy of the group to which he belonged, the national autonomy of the land he and his fellow chorographers represented—these did menace the king's claim to absolute power. The attractive force of this new enterprise could not be ignored. Its products provoked an almost sensual response, aroused an undeniable passion—a passion that could draw a man from what otherwise would have remained his deepest allegiance.<sup>27</sup> Among those touched by the new cartographic and chorographic representations, "natural affection" for one's country ("by far the strongest affection that is," according to Camden) was pushing all other affection to the side. Affection for the monarch that had been so powerful an element in Elizabeth's success was being marginalized, just as the signs of royal authority were marginalized on maps and frontispieces.

The direction in which attachment to the land was carrying at least some Englishmen in the first decades of the seventeenth century is seen most clearly in the group that formed around the second part of Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* when it appeared in 1622. Already the first part, published in 1613, with its extensive notes by John Selden and its obvious dependence on Camden's *Britannia*, had been firmly located in the orbit of the Society of Antiquaries, many of whose

members had been among Drayton's closest friends. And already the first part had expressed a keen sense of alienation from the royal court and from the literary practices associated with it. As Drayton remarks in his prefatory address "to the general reader," he found "the times since his Majesty's happy coming in to fall . . . heavily upon [his] distressed fortunes," and he despaired of success "in this lunatic age . . . when verses are wholly deduced to chambers" (4:v\*-vi\*). He dedicated the poem to Prince Henry, whose court was then a center of opposition to the king, and in the body of the poem itself he conspicuously stopped his catalogue of the English kings with Elizabeth, thus omitting all mention of James. Other poems from the *Pastorals* in 1606 to *The Shepherd's Sirena* in 1627 fill that blank with thinly veiled satire of James who, under the pastoral name of Olcon, "leaves the poor shepherd and his harmless sheep . . . to the stern wolf and deceitful fox" (2:562). "The power of kings I utterly defy," Drayton makes Fame say in the 1619 version of *Robert, Duke of Normandy*, "Nor am I awed by all their tyranny" (2:392).<sup>28</sup> In his own person he was never quite so bold. Yet an undertone of defiance does emerge in the poems he wrote during the years shortly before and after the publication of part 2, and that same tone characterizes the small community that rallied around the augmented *Poly-Olbion* and around Drayton himself.

Three commendatory poems head the 1622 addition to *Poly-Olbion*. Their authors, William Browne, George Wither, and John Reynolds, had been small children a quarter of a century earlier when Drayton began his great chorographical project, and they naturally regarded him as a survivor from another age—an age that put the Jacobean present to shame. "England's brave genius, raise thy head," writes Browne,

and see,

We have a muse in this mortality  
Of virtue yet survives. All met not death  
When we entombed our dear Elizabeth.  
Immortal Sidney, honored Colin Clout,  
Presaging what we feel, went timely out.  
Then why lives Drayton when the times refuse  
Both means to live and matter for a muse?  
Only without excuse to leave us quite,  
And tell us, durst we act, he durst to write.

(2:393)

Elizabeth, Sidney, and Spenser—these were the heroic figures younger Jacobean looked to for inspiration. Nor were they alone in this. Just a decade earlier Fulke Greville, the patron of both Camden and Speed, wrote his anti-Jacobean *Life of Sidney* (c. 1611), and in the same years Camden produced his *Annals; or, The History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth, late Queen of England* (1615).<sup>29</sup> For Drayton's generation, to which Camden and Greville also belonged, and for

the generation of Browne, Wither, and Reynolds, an intensely patriotic attachment to the land and its depiction and an equally intense nostalgia for the age of Elizabeth went hand in hand with a disdain for the Stuart monarch and his court. This is something of what it meant to be, as Drayton, Browne, and Wither each were, a Spenserian poet.<sup>30</sup> Ideally such a poet would simultaneously serve, as they supposed Spenser had done, the interests of the crown and of the country. But under James, this was no longer possible. So, forced to choose, these men took the side of the country—a country they identified with the memory of the great queen.<sup>31</sup>

Such partisanship had its risks. In 1621 John Selden spent some time in custody for advising parliament in a way James disapproved, which may explain why the second part of *Poly-Olbion* appeared without notes. In the same year George Wither was subjected to interrogation for breaking a royal order that prohibited discussion of state affairs. A more serious breach of the same order sent John Reynolds to jail for at least two years from 1624 to 1626. And in 1622 Drayton too worried lest he might violate the king's prohibition. "I fear, as I do stabbing, this word *state*" (3:206). But in the eyes of his admirers *Poly-Olbion* itself committed just such a violation, though in a cleverly indirect way.<sup>32</sup> For as they saw it, Drayton's "free-born numbers" exposed the pusillanimity of the Jacobean regime. "Tis well," says Wither,

thy happy judgment could devise,  
Which way a man this age might poetize,  
And not write satires. Or else so to write  
That scape thou mayst the clutches of despite.  
(4:395)

Wither's explanation for this remarkable immunity—"For through such woods and rivers trips thy muse, / As will or lose or drown him that pursues"—is not, as it may appear, merely an amusing conceit. The woods and rivers of England, or rather their representation, provided an ideologically secure refuge against official despotism, a sanctuary whose authority could be impugned only by one willing, as the king was not, to set himself openly against the country. But not even this protective strategy could shield poets weaker and younger than Drayton himself. "Had my invention," Wither continues,

Enabled been so brave a flight to make . . .  
Though I to no man's wrong had gone astray,  
I had been pounded on the king's highway.

By the second decade of James's reign, chorography had become a dangerously political activity. And a statement like Browne's at the start of his *Britannia's Pastorals* (1613), "Thus dear Britannia will I sing of thee," had a distinctly partisan feel, particularly when it came in a Spenserian poem and followed commendatory

verses by such men as Drayton and Selden. Britannia and the British monarch, so firmly identified with one another as to be virtually interchangeable through most of Elizabeth's reign, now occupied separate and mutually hostile camps.<sup>33</sup>

### The Ideology of Place and Particularity

From a project conceived, financed, and all but executed at court, a project that could fairly be said to have been authored by the queen and her government, we thus arrive some forty years later at one that balances its own authority and the authority of its representations *against* the authority of the crown. But what justification have we for comparing the two? How can an atlas and a lengthy poem be considered points on a single line—a line that also passes through an odd assortment of other texts, descriptive and antiquarian? Is it enough that they all represent in their different ways the same land? Part of the answer is already before us. These books belong together because they refer so often and so conspicuously to one another. They are bound by a dense net of intertextual relations. Nor are the relations only between texts. They are also between people. Though the group that supported *Poly-Olbion* in 1622 had little in common with the one that produced Saxton's atlas in 1579, the two are nevertheless linked by various intermediary social figurations, most importantly the one that formed around Camden's *Britannia* in its successive editions from 1586 to 1610.

All these seemingly disparate activities clustered under a single shared set of terms, terms that I have been using but have not yet stopped to examine. The most frequent were *survey*, *description*, and *chorography*. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century usage, all the makers of these books might be called "chorographers" or "surveyors"; the work they all did was to "survey" or "describe"; and their common product, whether mapbook, prose discourse, or poem, was a "description," a "survey," or a "chorography." A fairly late example, one of the many that remained in manuscript, Tristram Risdon's *Chorographical Description or Survey of the County of Devon*, managed to crowd all three terms into one title, and all three were used with reference to each of those liminal, genre-straining figures, Saxton and Drayton.<sup>34</sup> Heterogeneous as they now seem to us, *Poly-Olbion* and *Britannia*, Saxton's atlas and Speed's *Theater*, Norden's *Speculi*, Harrison's *Description*, Stow's *Survey*, and the various county chorographies of Lambarde, Carew, Burton, Owen, Erdeswicke, Coker, Risdon, Westcote, Habington, and Pole could once be called by the same names because they were recognized as members of the same genre.

What features distinguish this genre? Most important, of course, is the concern with place. Though the two terms and the practices they represent inevitably contaminate one another, chorography defines itself by opposition to chronicle.

It is the genre devoted to place, as chronicle is the genre devoted to time. The opposition was not, however, necessarily antagonistic. In at least one of the traditions that contributed to sixteenth-century chorography, the two kinds flourished in symbiotic union. Medieval British chronicles, from Gildas in the sixth century to Ranulf Higden in the fourteenth, typically begin with a description of place.<sup>35</sup> One book for the *orbis loca* is Higden's formula, and six for the *orbis gesta*. With a significant difference in scale (the "little world" of England having replaced the whole world), Harrison's *Description* has precisely this relationship to Holinshed's *Chronicles*, as Speed's *Theater* does to his *History*. Each is the topographical introduction to a chronological book. A striking number of other chorographers, including Leland, John Hooker, Stow, Drayton, and Camden, coupled the kinds in their careers, if not in any single work. Clearly these men saw no incompatibility between the two kinds. On the contrary, they understood the two as forming a necessary union. Omit either and the resulting work would, as Speed argued, be "but imperfectly laid open"—a soul without a body or a body without a soul.<sup>36</sup>

But it does nevertheless make some difference which of the two one chooses to emphasize. A chronicle history is, almost by definition, a story of kings. "The Succession of England's Monarchs" is the running title of Speed's *History*, and, as we turn over the pages of Hall, Holinshed, Stow, Speed, or Daniel, we find at the head of each the name of some particular king or queen. To judge from books like these, England is its monarchs. To be loyal to England is to be loyal to the monarch. The chorographers present a very different image of England. In them England is Devonshire, Stafford, and York; Stratton Hundred, Cripplegate Ward, and the Diocese of Rochester; Chiverston, Chester, and St. Michael's Mount. Loyalty to England here means loyalty to the land; to its counties, cities, towns, villages, manors, and wards; even to its uninhabited geographical features.

In the minds of most Elizabethans the land and the monarch were no doubt as closely bound to one another as Harrison's *Description* was to Holinshed's *Chronicles*. Ubiquitous urgings of service to "king and country" testify to this mentality. But in the seventeenth century the formula occurs more and more often without mention of the monarch. Service to the country alone—with all the ambiguous meaning the word *country* then had—kingdom, nation, county, locality, countryside—was displacing service to king *and* country, just as the latter had displaced service to God and his church or service to one's leige lord regardless of country. The emergence of the country as a single, if variously significant, term for the focal point of allegiance parallels the emergence of the description, survey, or chorography as an autonomous and widely practiced genre. The new autonomous chorography turns the old pattern, represented by Higden and by Harrison-Holinshed, inside out. Particular description, often many times longer than the general description that precedes it, takes the place of the chronicle history, which itself often reappears in a much abbreviated form within the general de-



scription. Kings and their doings, when they are not simply eliminated, are marginalized. They move, as they did on Drayton's frontispiece, from the center to the periphery. What moves to the center in their place is not, however, the land as a whole, at least not most frequently, but rather the land in all its most particular divisions.

Chorographies are repositories of proper names. To the many thousand names packed on the various maps, the discursive descriptions add many thousand more—ancient place names; names of places too small to be mapped; names of particular properties, buildings, and institutions; and most of all the names of families and of individual people. As the genre develops, however, the weight shifts from one end of this list to the other. Where the earlier chorographers—Lhuyd, Lambarde, and Camden—concentrated on place names and made etymology their principal tool, the later ones prefer genealogy and the names of people. More and more, chorographies become books where county gentry can find their manors, monuments, and pedigrees copiously set forth. In just a few decades, chorography thus progressed from being an adjunct to the chronicles of kings to become a topographically ordered set of real-estate and family chronicles. The individualizing process that made Saxton and Camden autonomous authors was making the representation of private property a matter of intense concern. King James might argue that in some ultimate sense all the land was the king's. The seventeenth-century successors of Lambarde and Camden showed to whom it really belonged—to the host of individual country gentlemen who found themselves and their claims represented in these books.

At the root of all representation is differentiation. A place or a person can be represented only if it can be in some way distinguished from its surroundings. Proper names do much of the work of distinguishing, and it is on them that the chorographers most heavily rely. But many undertook differentiation of a more pointed sort. Indeed, the marking of difference seems often to have been their chief justification for writing. As Richard Carew puts it, where he "can say little worth the observing for any difference from . . . other shires," he passes on.<sup>37</sup> Its differences make Cornwall worth describing, make Carew's book worth reading. Because of these differences, Cornwall has meaning. And so do the lives of Cornishmen like Carew. Their individual identity and authority depend on their participation in a system of local differences that chorographers, Carew among them, make it their self-justifying business to describe.

Authority and the representation of place had another, still more obviously political sense in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Richard Carew not only represented his native county in his *Survey of Cornwall*, he also represented two of its boroughs in parliament.<sup>38</sup> There was a marked resemblance between the genre and the political institution. If a chorography was a representative body, so was parliament. The same anatomical metaphor—the "body of all England"—was used repeatedly of both, as it was for the land itself. And as tension increased

between monarch and parliament, between court and country, so too did the importance of those things in which chorographers were specialists—local difference, local identity, and local representation—until parliament came almost to seem a living chorography, a map made flesh.

In the actual chorographies, as in their parliamentary counterpart, the more overtly political aspect of topographical representation took the form of a sometimes jealous assertion of local prerogative or, when the prerogative was no longer in force, of a fond memory of former authority. The relation of the land to all this is suggested by a practice William Lambarde describes—the Kentish custom of gavelkind. The subject first comes up in the course of Lambarde's discussion of the yeomanry, which, he claims, "is nowhere more free and jolly than in this shire."<sup>39</sup> He gives three reasons for this happy state: 1) "the communality of Kent was never vanquished by the Conqueror, but yielded itself by composition"; 2) "the forward in all battles belongeth to them (by a certain preeminence) in right of their manhood"; and, most important, 3) "there were never any bondmen (or villains, as the law calleth them) in Kent" (7). All three are associated with the custom of gavelkind. Because of it "everyman is a freeholder and hath some part of his own to live upon." From this landowning self-sufficiency came hardihood and resistance to conquest, which in turn secured "the continuance of their ancient usages, notwithstanding that the whole realm besides suffered alteration and change" (19). Thus "they only of all England . . . obtained forever their accustomed privileges" (21). Local particularity, individual autonomy, accustomed privilege, and resistance to royal encroachment—these, even in the mind of so ardent a supporter of the queen as Lambarde, belonged together.

What exactly is gavelkind? It is a mode of inheritance, particular to Kent, whereby property passes to all male offspring (or, in the absence of male offspring, to all female offspring) equally—"give all kin," as Lambarde's pseudo-etymology has it. Whenever the custom originated, however it was maintained, and whatever its effects (all matters of concern to Lambarde), it belongs inalienably to the land—to the land as a whole and to each individual parcel. To change it is beyond the power of any owner, including the king. The custom partakes, as Lambarde puts it, of the land's very "nature," is "so inseparably knit to the land as in a manner nothing but an act of parliament can clearly dis sever them" (482, 485–86). Only, he seems to be saying, the assembled representatives of the whole land can alter a custom so firmly attached to any part of it. Individual will, be it the king's, counts for nothing. Customary usage counts for all. "And this," Lambarde insists, "is not my fantasy, but the resolution of all the justices" (482).

Such local particularism and local prerogative are the very stuff of chorography. I do not by this mean to claim that many of these books describe institutional arrangements as tenaciously landbound as gavelkind. They don't. As well as being a chorographer, Lambarde was an accomplished legal scholar. He naturally sought a legal basis for Kent's distinguishing difference. But whatever the

inclination of the individual chorographer, the generic nature of his undertaking obliged him to emphasize particularity and its relation to place.

What then becomes of the nationalist impulse with which the whole chorographic enterprise began? Does it simply subvert itself by the momentum of its own representational methods? If we compare Camden's *Britannia* at one end of the process and Sir William Dugdale's *Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656) at the other, our initial inclination may well be to say yes. In Dugdale the eleven folio pages Camden had devoted to Warwickshire expand to 826. Though the two authors present similar sorts of information in similar ways, so massive a change in scale amounts almost to a change in kind. Overwhelmed by the particularity of Warwickshire, we risk losing sight of Britain. But that risk is considerably less severe than it might seem. The particularities, after all, constantly remind us of the whole of which they are part and from which they take meaning, even if only by difference. Nationalism is what ultimately justifies a project as particular as Dugdale's. And the nation, unlike the dynasty, is in turn strengthened by its very receptiveness to such individual and communal autonomy. The dialectic of general and particular that is built into the structure of a chorography in the end constitutes the nation it represents.

Between a Camden or a Dugdale and the nation stands the genre. It is the counterpart of those other institutional bodies, including parliament, that support the body of the state and the body of the self. It recruits new authors and defines the object they describe, even as it is itself written and defined by the authors and the object. Chorography, still more than most such institutions, assumes the form of a self-consciously intended project. In the first contribution to the kind, Lambarde expressed the wish "that someone in each shire would make the enterprise for his own country to the end that by joining our pens and conferring our labors . . . we might at the last by the union of many parts and papers compact one whole and perfect body and book of our English topography," and Dugdale repeats the call eighty years later.<sup>40</sup> In the nineteenth and on into the twentieth century the Victoria History of the English Counties was still responding to this call and still representing the country in terms of place and particularity. But by the nineteenth century the ideological import of this representational mode had been fully absorbed, had indeed proved triumphant. Three hundred years earlier, chorographies pictured an entity that, as a basis of authority, hardly existed, an entity that had remained subordinate to the dynastic regime whose power defined its limits. Conquest and inheritance had created the Kingdom of England, as, in the lifetime of most of our chorographers, inheritance created the Empire of Great Britain. But however its political boundaries were set, the land did nevertheless emerge in Elizabethan and Jacobean chorographies as a primary source of national identity—emerged by means of a process both dependent on and responsible for the emergence of chorography itself as an autonomous genre.

## The Muse on Progress

I began this essay with an allusion to Spenser and Sidney not only because, as a literary historian, I felt more comfortable taking off from my home base. The institutionalization of English poetry, its establishment as a communal enterprise that could justify by its own internal dynamism the efforts of its practitioners, finds, as I have been suggesting, a counterpart in the development of English chorography. Both begin in close alliance with the court, which provides not only patronage and protection but also an image of power—an image that both poetry and chorography represent and, in representing, emulate. But from emulation springs difference, alienation, finally even opposition, until both representational modes emerge as sources of cultural authority that, in a period of political tension, will rival the authority of the crown. The two developments occur simultaneously, center on the same generation. Sidney, Spenser, Camden, and Speed were born within three years of one another, came of age together in the relatively tranquil period of institutional consolidation midway through Elizabeth's reign, felt alike the influence of both Roger Ascham, who in his *Schoolmaster* (1570) called on young Englishmen to have the kingdom of their own language, and Saxton. The task of articulating an England that for the first time could be "seen" was theirs jointly by birth. It remained, however, for someone a decade younger than they, someone close enough to them in age to share their generational location and the duty that came with it, but far enough to know them and their work when he began his own, to try putting the two kinds together, to write a chorography that is also a poem. That, of course, is what Drayton does in his *Poly-Olbion*.

*Poly-Olbion* differs from most chorographies in lacking an introductory section specifically reserved for general description. Instead it begins immediately with a particular description of "the Cornish and Devonian grounds" of southwest England and proceeds from there, region by region, until it ends thirty songs later in the far northern counties of Westmorland and Cumberland. Drayton does not, however, neglect general description or the chronicle matter that occupied such a large place in most general descriptions. Rather he folds such information into his particular descriptions, making the various places themselves recite England's chronicle history. Already in the first song the river Dent tells of Brut's conquest of Albion, and in other songs the rivers, hills, and woods of England and Wales tell of the various dynasties that since Brut have ruled Britain. Yet for all Drayton's efforts to find and assert continuity, the picture that emerges from his recension of chronicle history is very like the one we earlier noticed on his frontispiece—a picture of discontinuity and mutual hostility. Looking at such a picture one sees the image of many nations, all ultimately foreign to the land they have occupied. One does not see the single nation, the integrated and cohesive body, that would justify Drayton's literary project or the more general representational project of his generation.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about *Poly-Olbion's* chronicle material is that it is contained within a chorography. However strong Drayton's commitment to the kind of providential dynastic history favored by Holinshed and his fellow "compilers," he nevertheless chose a generic form that puts the main emphasis elsewhere. He took as his model Camden not Holinshed, let the shape and order of his poem be determined by the divisions of an atlas not by the steps of a pedigree. Not king but country dominates his vision. Before Brut came, the land was there awaiting him. Through all the dynastic changes that have occurred since, the land has kept its integrity. Various streams and woods and mountains have become partisan supporters of the different peoples that have lived near them. The rivers of Wales recount the conquests of Arthur and the English rivers answer with the glorious deeds of the Saxons. But these differences and the many others that have no dependence on human history—differences between hills and valleys, between forests and fields, between marshlands and dry—are parts of an animating *discordia concors*, a dialectic of the particular and the general, characteristic of chorography. In the poem, as on its frontispiece, the one unified body is the body of the land.<sup>41</sup>

Drayton is a Spenserian poet; *Poly-Olbion*, his *Faerie Queene*. But what a vast ideological difference between a poem like *The Faerie Queene*, whose every quest is said to originate at and lead back to a single central court, and one like *Poly-Olbion*, which contains no court; between a poem whose every book claims to represent the actual queen of England and one that never mentions the reigning monarch! *Poly-Olbion* does nevertheless contain many claims to sovereignty. The Dert, the Parret, the Severn, the Lug, the Thames, the Trent, the Humber, the Teis, Dean Forest, Malvern Hill, the Vale of Evsham, and the Isle of Man are all called king or queen. But none exercises effective rule beyond a narrow region, and such rule as they do achieve inspires in Drayton images that reveal his antipathy to royal centralism. When, for example, the Ex, after having gathered the tribute of many smaller streams, empties into the queenly Dert, Drayton is reminded of

some unthrifty youth, depending on the court,  
To win an idle name, that keeps a needless port;  
And raising his old rent, exacts his farmers store  
The landlord to enrich, the tenants wondrous poor,  
Who, having lent him theirs, he then consumes his own,  
That with most vain expense upon the prince is thrown,  
So these, the lesser brooks, unto the greater pay.

(4:14–15)

Monarchy impoverishes the land. Such anticourtly satire is, of course, common in Elizabethan, as in Jacobean, poetry. Spenser is full of it. But in Drayton, unlike Spenser, the satire finds no antidote, is countered by no positive image of the

benign effects of monarchic rule. Instead, positive value is invested in an implicitly antimonarchic image, an image of the headless (or, better, the many-headed) body of the land.

When Spenser thinks of rivers flowing into one another, he too thinks of the courtly center of power, but differently. "So from the Ocean all rivers spring," he says to his "most dreaded Sovereine" in the proem to book 6,

And tribute backe repay as to their King.  
Right so from you all goodly virtues well  
Into the rest, which round about you ring.  
(6.proem.7)

The more elaborate prosopopoeic renderings of rivers and their merging, those *epithalamia fluviorum* in which both Spenser and Drayton excel, make still more apparent the ideological difference suggested by these brief images. To Spenser's marriage of the Thames and the Medway (4.11.8–53) all the watery folk of the world, from King Neptune to the humblest fountain nymph, come in strict hierarchical procession. This is a royal wedding. Thames, on whose bank stands "famous Troynovant" where "her kingdomes throne is chiefly resiant" (4.11.28), is the king of all English and Irish rivers and receives as his due the attendance of all.

Ne none disdained low to him to lout:  
No not the stately Severne grudg'd at all,  
Ne storming Humber, though he looked stout;  
But both him honor'd as their principall,  
And let their swelling waters low before him fall.  
(4.11.30)

In *Poly-Olbion* Severn is herself a queen; Humber, a king. Neither pays obeisance to King Thames, nor does either attend any fête outside his or her own region. When the Thames's parents, Tame and Isis, wed in Drayton's poem, only their actual tributaries and the contiguous natural sites, the Chiltern Hills, the Vales of Alesbury and White Horse, and the forests of Whichwood and Bernwood, join in the celebration, a celebration that in comparison to Spenser's is a very homely affair. Clearly Drayton was far less susceptible than Spenser to the humbling and exalting thrill of absolutism. His image of authority, an image determined by the genre in which he chose to write, is at once more dispersed and less personal.

Though Spenser's river marriage seems to have begun as an autonomous poem, the *Epithalamion Thamesis*, and though it draws heavily on Harrison's *Description* and Camden's *Britannia*, it can never have been truly chorographical. It violates the very premise of chorography, fidelity to the natural disposition of the land. In Spenser, sovereign will—the will of King Thames and the will of the poet—assembles rivers whose waters would otherwise meet only in the great

oceanic annihilation of fluvial identity, in that ultimate sovereign body, where all individual bodies are lost. *The Faerie Queene* thus presents an image of royal and artistic power exercised in defiance of the very geographical differences that it seems intent on celebrating. Such tension cannot be found in Drayton's poem. His rivers stay in their beds. They attend only the marriages to which the course of nature and the representational conventions of chorographic description invite them. Like a king, the Spenserian mythopoeic artist creates another nature, gathers the Ganges, the Tagus, and the Thames in a single imagined space as easily as he gathers their names in a single sentence.<sup>42</sup> Drayton denies himself this power. He does mention widely separated rivers, but he only mentions them.<sup>43</sup> If a map won't bring them together, neither will he.

*Poly-Olbion* locates itself, as I have said, at the crossing of two representational modes, at the intersection of two communities. It is both poem and chorographical description. As chorography, it must respect the actual disposition of the land. It can only meet the Severn, the Thames, or the Humber in the parts of the country where they actually flow. But as poem, it can make them speak. It animates the land and gives it voice.

These two functions—the perambulatory and the inspirational—meet in the figure of Drayton's Muse, the one “character” who is present throughout the poem. His Muse represents that intermediary body—call it genre, community, or representational mode—that stands between the individual writer and the land he describes. Drayton several times renames the Muse “Invention”—*inventio*. She is the finding out, the institutionalized power of subject making, on which both he and, in the fiction of his poem, the land depend for inspiration. The Medway, the Tyne, Holland Fen, and the Devil's Ditch call on the Muse just as the poet does, mingle their voices with hers in precisely the same way. In *Poly-Olbion*, poet, Muse, and land are represented in the very mutually enabling relation to one another that we earlier observed between Saxton, cartography, and England or between Camden, chorography, and Britain. Because of the Muse and the privileged access she gives him to the land, Drayton can set his authority above even that of the king, for

not the greatest king, should he his treasure rain,  
The muses sacred gifts can possibly obtain;  
No, were he monarch of the universal earth,  
Except that gift from heaven be breathed into his birth.  
(4:421)

The poet is not a king, but he, like the cartographer and the chorographer, has a power and represents a power that kings might well envy. Remember that it was Saxton's name, not the royal arms, that endured on his maps; Camden's brand of patriotic independence, not James's absolutism, that governed England's self-image for the next three and a half centuries.

One critic has noticed a likeness between the Muse's peregrination through England and Wales and a royal progress. "The forms of entertainment the Muse receives resemble," she writes, "those enjoyed, or endured, by Elizabeth and James on their progresses: long orations everywhere, often setting forth the merits and history of the place visited; debates and disputations; musical entertainments; elaborate festivals."<sup>44</sup> Whatever royal authority accrues to the Muse by virtue of this likeness is, however, shared by the poet. Though Drayton does not often use the term *progress*, when he does use it, it can apply as easily to either.<sup>45</sup> The displacement of the monarch thus works in favor of both the individual authorial self and the enabling community to which he belongs. But it depends on the authority of the impersonal third figure that both serve, the figure of the land itself. Together the poet and the Muse go on progress, but the function of their progress is to provide the occasion and the inspiration for the land's self-expression.

In its almost exclusive emphasis on the land's revelation of itself, the chorographic progress of *Poly-Olbion* differs strikingly from the royal progresses of either Elizabeth or James. However much these monarchs were obliged to hear of local history and topography (and James, at least, heard as little as he could), their primary aim was rather to make their own power manifest. They traveled more to be seen than to see. They were set, as both several times remarked, high on a stage "in the sight and view of all the world."<sup>46</sup> Their authority depended on its visibility, depended on making itself known in a real-life theater of power. But here too chorography invades the royal domain, usurps the stage, puts its image of the land in the place of the monarch. What we see when we open *The Theater of the Empire of Great Britain*—or, for that matter, any other chorographical book—is not the king but the country. The function of such books is precisely to make the land visible, to set it before us in such a way that we will know both its greatness and its particularity, a particularity in which its primary viewers, the land-owning gentry of England and Wales, had their part.

*Poly-Olbion* combines the visual and the verbal, the cartographic, the chorographic, the iconographic, and the poetic. Aesthetically, inasmuch as aesthetics can be distinguished from ideology, the combination may not be altogether successful. A fifteen-thousand-line descriptive poem in pedestrian hexameters is enough to sate the heartiest literary appetite. In its own time, whether for this reason or because, as Drayton himself charged, court-influenced readers were disinclined to "see the rarities and history of [their] own country delivered by a true native muse" (4:v\*), *Poly-Olbion* probably reached a far smaller audience than did Saxton's atlas, Camden's *Britannia*, or Speed's *Theater*. But Drayton's book does, nevertheless, express more openly than any of the others the new social and political values that were the unintended product of chorographic description. In the poem itself, in the notes and commendatory verses that accompany it, in its frontispiece and cartographic illustrations, Drayton and his collaborators make



known both their antipathy to Stuart absolutism and their allegiance to a rival source of authority—a source of authority that legitimates that antipathy and enables them as individual authors and as members of several overlapping communities. In *Poly-Olbion*, the poet, the Muse, and the land at last assume the monarchic role toward which their counterparts in more than a dozen chorographic descriptions had been unconsciously moving. No wonder the poem, whatever its aesthetic qualities, was not much liked at court.

### Chorography and Whiggery

The material we have been considering prompts a question: Is there a natural and inevitable antagonism between mapping and chorographical description on the one hand and royal absolutism on the other? Are maps and descriptions of place (say, tour guides) always Whiggish in their ideological effect, always implicit advocates of parliamentary supremacy? To claim so much would be hazardous and probably untrue. In seventeenth-century France—the France most notably of Henry IV and Louis XIV—maps seem to have functioned in untroubled support of a strongly centralized monarchic regime.<sup>47</sup> But elsewhere there are signs of conflict. In the Low Countries map making and the widespread use of maps went hand in hand with a nascent bourgeois republicanism.<sup>48</sup> And in Philip II's Spain, Pedro de Esquivel's great cartographic survey of the Iberian peninsula was kept in manuscript, locked in the Escorial as "a secret of state."<sup>49</sup> These examples suggest (and of course for them to be more than merely suggestive they would have to be developed in much greater detail) that the English experience cannot simply be taken as the type of what happened in Europe generally. But neither can that experience be dismissed as irrelevant to what happened elsewhere. At the very least, it should help us to remember an obvious though easily forgotten point, that wherever maps and chorographic descriptions were used and whatever the consequences of their use, they could never be ideologically neutral, could never be mere tools, whether of monarchic centralism or any other organization of power.<sup>50</sup> They inevitably entered into systems of relations with other representational practices and, in doing so, altered the meaning and the authority of all the others.

Saxton, Camden, Norden, Speed, Drayton, and the many county chorographers, however faithfully they may have gathered and repeated the "facts" of England's history and geography, had an inescapable part in creating the cultural entity they pretended only to represent. And in creating that entity, they also brought into being, as I have been arguing, the authority that underwrote their own discourse. They thus made themselves. They are the prototypes of what might be called the *novus homo chorographicus*—new chorographical man—whose voice can be heard in Camden's claim that he was moved to publish *Britannia* by "the love of my country which compriseth all love in it," in Speed's offering of

his *Theater* “upon the altar of love to my country,” or in Stow’s statement that describing London “is a duty that I willingly owe to my native mother and country and an office that of right I hold myself bound in love to bestow upon the politic body and members of the same.”<sup>51</sup> Love and country, this is their common theme. A century earlier such expressions would have been nearly incomprehensible. A decade or two later they could have served as rallying cries for a political faction that opposed the court and called itself the “country.”<sup>52</sup> By then—that is, by the 1620s—the publication of chorography had become an overtly political act. But, if my reading of these texts is right, it was always a political act, though its politics were not always what its sponsors or even what its authors thought them to be.

## Notes

1. Among those earlier maps was one (which has not survived) by Saxton’s own mentor, the Yorkshire clergyman John Rudd. Others were drawn by George Lily, Laurence Nowell, and Humphrey Lhuys. See Sarah Tyacke and John Huddy, *Christopher Saxton and Tudor Map-Making*, British Library Series no. 2 (London, 1980), 7–11. I wish to acknowledge the generous assistance of John Huddy and other members of the staff of the British Library Map Room in my work on this article.
2. G. 3604, British Library.
3. R. A. Skelton, *Saxton’s Survey of England and Wales with a Facsimile of Saxton’s Wall-Map of 1583* (Amsterdam, 1974), 22.
4. Coming from a different direction, Victor Morgan has reached a similar conclusion in two overlapping articles, “The Cartographic Image of ‘The Country’ in Early Modern England,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 29 (1979): 129–54; and “Lasting Image of the Elizabethan Era,” *The Geographic Magazine* 52 (1980): 401–8. The former supplies more evidence; the latter states its conclusion more boldly.
5. J. R. Hale, quoted in J. B. Harley, “Meaning and Ambiguity in Tudor Cartography,” in *English Map-Making, 1500–1650*, ed. Sarah Tyacke (London, 1983), 26. I have profited from Harley’s suggestive and informative exploration of “cartographic semantics.”
6. Skelton, *Saxton’s Survey*, 16. Harrison stops at “so perfectly.”
7. *Ibid.*, 16.
8. *Ibid.*, 17; Skelton’s translation. Skelton mistakenly gives 1584 as the date of this edition.
9. These documents are all reprinted by Skelton, *ibid.*, 15–16.
10. See Ifor M. Evans and Heather Lawrence, *Christopher Saxton, Elizabethan Map-Maker* (Wakefield, Eng., 1979), 15–17.
11. In the case of Saxton’s maps, the person most responsible for their existence was in all likelihood none of the three whose claims are represented on the sheets themselves—not the queen, Seckford, or Saxton—but rather William Cecil, Lord Burghley, who for many years before Saxton’s commission had been known for taking “especial pleasure in geographical maps” and for knowing “how to make good use of them in [his] office” (Skelton, *Saxton’s Survey*, 15); who was the chief signatory of the various government decrees favoring Saxton’s labors; who was master of the court of Wards to which Seckford was promoted; whose particular needs determined the order, timing,

- and specific content of Saxton's survey; and who received, annotated, and even corrected the proofs as they emerged from the press. See Skelton's discussion of Burghley's part in the Saxton survey (8) and the detailed description of Burghley's map-book in Evans and Lawrence, *Saxton*, 143–47.
12. The quotations regarding the use of maps are from Thomas Blundeville and John Dee; Morgan, "Lasting Image," 405–6.
  13. The full-page coat of arms seems to have been Norden's way of appealing for patronage. The description of Middlesex was dedicated to Elizabeth, and a copy of Hertford (G. 3685, British Library) was presented to her. The manuscript description of Essex (1594), presented to the earl of Essex, gives a page to that nobleman's coat of arms (Additional Manuscript 33769, British Library), and the manuscript description of Windsor (1607) does the same for James, its dedicatee (Harleian Manuscript 3749, British Library). Interestingly, while the map in the Essex volume does bear the royal arms, none of those in the Windsor volume do.
  14. *The Works of Michael Drayton*, ed. J. William Hebel, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1931–41), 4:vi\*. Subsequent references to this edition will be included in the text.
  15. On Coke see J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1957), chaps. 2 and 3. As it happens, Drayton himself shared Coke's devotion to the continuity of British institutions, as he makes clear in *Poly-Olbion*. But, unlike Coke's, his representation of Britain finally relegates, as I suggest later in this paper, dynastic and institutional continuity to a secondary role.
  16. *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Samuel Daniel*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart, 5 vols. (London, 1885–96), 4:102 and 133.
  17. I would suggest, though with some hesitation, that even the ugly distortion in the drawing of Britain, the squat lower limbs and the elongated torso, may have been intended. This distortion allows Britain's gown to assume a shape roughly approximating the outline of England and Wales, as one sees it on Saxton's map.
  18. The most recent discussion of the Renaissance discovery of the self, Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980), subjects the whole notion to a passionately ironic reexamination. There is, however, no irony in the patriotic fervor of the best-known account of the Elizabethan discovery of England, A. L. Rowse's *The England of Elizabeth* (London, 1950), 31–65.
  19. For an interpretation of Jacobean literature that does all it can to support this absolutist view, see Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature* (Baltimore, 1983).
  20. Transcribed from G. 3685, British Library.
  21. The progress of Norden's work on the *Speculum Britanniae* has been traced in detail by William Ravenhill in his edition of *John Norden's Manuscript Maps of Cornwall and Its Nine Hundreds* (Exeter, 1972), 11–23.
  22. From a letter dated 10 July 1618, printed in Richard Parr, *The Life of James Ussher* (1686), 65 (letters are paginated separately).
  23. Kevin Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton, 1586–1631: History and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1979), 32.
  24. The most thorough study is Linda Van Norden's "The Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1946). See also Van Norden, "Sir Henry Spelman on the Chronology of the Elizabethan College of Antiquaries," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 13 (1949–50): 131–60; and the discussions by May McKisack, *Medieval History in the Tudor Age* (Oxford, 1971), 155–69; F. J. Levy, *Tudor Historical Thought* (San Marino, Calif., 1967), 163–66; and Sharpe, *Cotton*, 17–32.

25. This petition is printed in *A Collection of Curious Discourses*, ed. Thomas Hearne, 2 vols. (London, 1771), 2:324–26.
26. Sir Henry Spelman, quoted by Van Norden in “The Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries,” 74.
27. On the delight Englishmen took in maps, see Morgan, “Lasting Image,” 405–6.
28. On Drayton’s attitude toward James, see Bernard H. Newdigate, *Michael Drayton and His Circle* (Oxford, 1941), 124–35.
29. A decade later the names of Camden and Greville were once again significantly linked when they founded the first two chairs of history at Oxford and Cambridge, respectively. See Kevin Sharpe, “The Foundation of the Chairs of History at Oxford and Cambridge: An Episode in Jacobean Politics,” *History of Universities* 2 (1982): 127–52.
30. See Joan Grundy, *The Spenserian Poets* (London, 1969), where all three are discussed. David Norbrook describes the political attitudes of the seventeenth-century Spensers in *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London, 1985), 195–214.
31. On this nostalgia for the age of Elizabeth see Richard F. Hardin, *Michael Drayton and the Passing of Elizabethan England* (Lawrence, Kans., 1973); and Anne Barton, “Harking Back to Elizabeth: Ben Jonson and Caroline Nostalgia,” *ELH* 48 (1981): 706–31. In “Two Elizabeths? James I and the Late Queen’s Famous Memory,” *Canadian Journal of History* 20 (1985): 167–91, D. R. Woolf shows that memories of Elizabeth could also be used by James and those who supported his policies.
32. For an illuminating general discussion of the strategy of self-protective indirection that I am here describing, see Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison, Wisc., 1985).
33. See Kathleen Tillotson, “Drayton, Browne, and Wither,” *TLS*, 27 November 1937, 911.
34. Camden called Saxton, who was by profession a surveyor and was usually designated as such, an “excellent chorographer” (*optimus chorographicus*), and Saxton himself, as we have noticed, specified his relation to his maps with the tag “Christophorus Saxton descripsit.” As for Drayton, the subtitle of his *Poly-Olbion*, like the subtitle of Camden’s *Britannia*, calls the work a “chorographical description,” and the initial lines of its opening argument tell us that “the sprightly Muse her wing displays / And the French Islands first surveys” (4:1).
35. Georges Edelen discusses this medieval tradition in his introduction to Harrison’s *Description of England* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1968), xvi–xviii.
36. John Speed, *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine*, 2 vols. (1611), I: sig. A1.
37. Richard Carew of Antony, *Survey of Cornwall*, ed. F. E. Halliday (London, 1953), 138.
38. For an account of Carew’s parliamentary service and a description of the constituencies he represented, see P. W. Hasler, *The House of Commons, 1558–1603*, 3 vols. (London, 1981).
39. William Lambarde, *A Perambulation of Kent* (Chatham, Eng., 1826), 7.
40. Lambarde, *Perambulation* (1596), sig. L14<sup>r</sup>. In 1576 he had written “antiquities” rather than “topography,” an indication that his own sense of what he had done became clearer over the years, particularly as a result of Camden’s *Britannia*, which he goes on in 1596 to laud. See also Sir William Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire* (1656), sig. a3.
41. See Barbara C. Ewell, “Drayton’s *Poly-Olbion*: England’s Body Immortalized,” *Studies in Philology* 75 (1978): 297–315. In this article Ewell develops a hint supplied by Angus Fletcher, who claimed that “it could be shown that *Poly-Olbion* is, with *The Faerie Queene* and *Paradise Lost*, one of the most comprehensive and powerful of English sublime poems, though failure to understand its allegorical use of the body image has kept it

from any general public favor." See Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1964), 236n.

42. The royal equivalent of such poetic prerogative is the king's summoning of parliament, some of whose members have such names as "Essex," "Leicester," "Surrey," and so on. Like the poet, the king assembles the land in a single meeting place in defiance of the normal limitations of geography.
43. See the Charwell's praise of rivers at the end of the Tame-Isis wedding (4:309–10). The passage recalls Spenser only to suggest its difference.
44. Grundy, *Spenserian Poets*, 134.
45. See, for example, 4:397 and 30.
46. Quoted in J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments, 1584–1601*, 2 vols. (London, 1953–57), 2:119. See also *The Political Works of James I*, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (1918; reprint ed., New York, 1965), 5 and 310. Christopher Pye discusses the relation of visibility to power in "The Sovereign, the Theater, and the Kingdom of Darknesse: Hobbes and the Spectacle of Power," *Representations* 8 (1984): 85–106.
47. See G. R. Crane, *Maps and Their Makers: An Introduction to the History of Cartography* (1953; reprint ed., Folkstone, Eng., 1978), 85–91. In twentieth-century France, still the most powerfully centralized country in the Western world, maps and chorographic descriptions do function not only as instruments of bureaucratic control but also as representations of a centrifugal ideology. This becomes explicit in at least one modern chorography, Georges and Régine Pernoud's *Tour de France médiéval* (Paris, 1982), whose announced purpose is to present the "other" France, the non-Parisian, non-classical, nonbureaucratic France of provinces and villages. And it is, I think, often the effect of the omnipresent Michelin maps and guides.
48. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Netherlanders led Europe in the production and use of maps. They furthermore provided the specific models for Saxton and Speed and, through the efforts of Ortelius, the incitement for Lhuys, Lambard, and Camden. Svetlana Alpers discusses the ideology of Dutch mapping in *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago, 1983), 119–68.
49. James R. Akerman and David Buisseret, *Monarchs, Ministers, and Maps: A Cartographic Exhibit at the Newberry Library* (Chicago, 1985), 13. Pedro de Esquivel's survey was, interestingly enough, performed in the same decade as Saxton's. The differing fortunes of the two suggests something of the differing politics of the two countries.
50. For an account of the relation of maps to the modern bureaucratic state, see Chandra Mukerji, *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism* (New York, 1983), 79–130.
51. Camden, *Britain* (1610), trans. Philemon Holland, sig. æ 4; Speed, *Theatre*, 1: sig. ¶ 4; and Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. Charles Lothbridge Kingsford, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1908), 1:xcviii.
52. The widespread use in Caroline England of the term *country* to designate those who opposed the court has been documented by Perez Zagorin in *The Court and the Country: The Beginning of the English Revolution* (New York, 1970). Though my argument does not depend on anything like a full acceptance of Zagorin's notion of a well-developed country party in the 1620s and 1630s, it does suppose (in opposition to the views of at least a few recent historians) that the civil wars of the mid-seventeenth century did have causes that antedate 1640. In this I agree with the general position developed by Lawrence Stone in *The Causes of the English Revolution, 1529–1642* (London, 1972).

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# Index

- Adelman, Janet, 199–200, 204–5  
*Aeneid*, 158  
 Agrippa, Cornelius, 184  
 Alexander, William, 108  
 Alpers, Paul, vii, x, 21, 216n.10  
 Altieri, Charles, 132n.65  
 Amazonian mythology: in *The Faerie Queene*, 36, 46, 47–48; in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 35–38, 40–42. *See also* Gender, politics of  
 Anthropology. *See* Renaissance ethnography  
 Apocalypse, Renaissance representations of, 7–8, 21, 308–9  
*Arcadia* (Philip Sidney), viii, 108, 132n.69, 180n.22; and aristocratic ethos, 16–17; comedic violence in, 15, 17, 18; and humanist rhetoric, 18–19; and literary autonomy, 174; love poetry in, 167–69, 170–71; representation of social rebellion in, 15–19; Sidney's circumstances when writing, 16; social status in, 174, 180n.21; versification in, 171–72  
 Aretino, Pietro, 184, 187  
 Ariosto, Ludovico, 3, 165  
 Aristocracy: and architectural design, 96–98, 106; and chivalry, 15; ethos of, in Sidney, 16–17; marriage customs of, 49; as patrons of art, 55–56; and repression of peasant rebellion, 7, 10–11, 16–19, 25. *See also* Social status  
 Aristotle, 157n.6, 158n.8; embryological theory of, 42–43; on metaphor, 138; on poetic typology, 158; on rhetoric, 158, 159  
 Art. *See* Miniature portraits; Renaissance art; *names of individual artists*  
 Ascham, Roger, 352  
*Asphodel and Stella* (Philip Sidney), 131nn. 55, 59, 60; 132n.65; secret ciphers in, 133; and self-representation, 115–16, 120; and sonnet craze, 123; verbal ornamentation in, 111–18; visual imagery in, 137  
 Authority, royal: and authorship, 340–41; and chorography, 334, 340–41, 344, 348–49, 350, 352–54, 356–57; in Hobbes, 281, 282–87, 301n.12; and mapmaking, 327–28, 332, 335–36, 361n.49; and nationalism, 340–41, 342, 347; and poetic power, 361n.42; and property, 349–50. *See also* Authority; Power  
 Authorship, 178n.5, 257n.7; authority of, 184–85, 273, 330, 343–44; and cultural autonomy, 184, 191; and the domain of art, 174–75; and Jonson, 265; legal rights of, xi–xii; and literary marketplace, 184, 266, 273–74, 275n.8; and literary property, 274; and mapmaking, 343–44; and nationalism, 240–41, 351; and patronage, 184, 330; and political power, 281, 286–87, 316–17; and printing and publication, 184, 265, 274n.4; and royal authority, 340–41; and Saxton's atlas, 328–29; Shakespearean, 219–20; and theater, 266–68, 270, 273, 277n.22. *See also* Domain of art; Literary marketplace; Property, literary  
 Bacon, Francis, 48, 49, 53–54, 65  
 Bakhtin, Mikhail, 80–81  
 Barber, C. L., 33  
 Barbour, Hugh, 304  
 Barish, Jonas, 262n.9  
 Bedlam Hospital, 54, 75  
 Benveniste, Émile, 160n.16  
 Bettelheim, Bruno, 218  
 Bible: Book of Amos, 214; Book of Job, 21, 296, 298; Book of John, 207–8; Book of Revelation, 208–9, 211, 313; burning of, 87; image of Good Shepherd in, 166; prodigal parable in, 83–84; “prophesyings” based on, 166, 167; Reformation attitudes toward, 87, 309, 311  
 Bosse, Abraham, 301n.11  
 Bradley, A. C., 198, 204  
 Brazilian culture: in Renaissance ethnography, 69–74  
 Brecht, Bertolt, 199, 204  
 Breton, Nicholas, 235–38  
 Brooks, Harold, 31, 32  
 Browne, Sir Thomas, 77  
 Browne, William, 99–100, 345, 346  
 Burns, Norman T., 308  
 Burton, William, 342  
 Camden, William, 75, 105, 328–29, 334, 336, 338, 342–45, 347, 354–58 *passim*, 360nn. 29, 34, 40  
 Cannibalism, 36, 202–4, 213  
 Carew, Richard, 81–82, 342, 347, 349  
 Cartography. *See* Maps and mapmaking  
 Catharine de Medici, 71, 72  
 Cavell, Stanley, vii, x–xi  
 Caxton, William, 266  
 Cecil, Robert, 48, 99–100, 107  
 Cecil, William, 358n.11  
 Cervantes, Miguel de, 266; *Don Quixote*, 184  
 Chaucer, Geoffrey, 170  
 Cherubini, William, 115  
 Chivalric romance narrative, 185, 188, 189, 190



- Chorography, xii, 361n.47; and antimonarchical politics, 335–41, 344–47, 352–58; Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* as poetic example of, 335–40, 342, 345–47, 352–57; as historical genre, 347–49, 350, 351, 353–54; and James I, 346–47; and nationalism, 328, 344, 348–49, 351, 357–58; and parliamentary politics, 349–50, 357; and particularity of place, 349–51; and private property, 349–50; and royal authority, 334, 340–41, 348–49, 350, 352–54, 356–57. *See also* Maps and map-making; *Poly-Olbion*
- Christ figure: in *Coriolanus*, 204, 207–10, 211, 214; in monument by Dürer, 5–7, 11–12
- Civil Wars (English), 327–28
- Claim of Reason*, *The* (Stanley Cavell), 197
- Clark, Sir George, xiii
- Class conflict, representation of: in *Arcadia*, 15–19; in *The Faerie Queene*, 19–23; in *2 Henry IV*, 23–25; in monument by Dürer, 5–14; and property, 14–15
- Classicism, 1, 27n.15, 273
- Coke, Sir Edward, 340, 359n.15
- Colonialism, 46, 74
- Comedy, 3, 12, 39, 44, 85, 214, 216; and anti-courtly satire, 260–61, 271, 353; jest-book tradition, 188; mock encomium, 152–53, 159; mock epic, 186–87; and violence, 15–18, 19
- Cope, Walter, 65–66, 68
- Copyright law, 266–70
- Corbett, Margery, 300, 301n.11
- Coriolanus* (Shakespeare), 212, 215n.9; cannibalism in, 199, 202–4, 212, 213; Christ figure in, 204, 207–10, 211, 214; classical influence in, 204, 207–9, 210; class issues in, 198–99, 202, 206, 210–11, 215n.7; and epistemology, 197; equation of words and food in, x–xi, 211–14; Fable of the Belly in, 198, 210–12; father figure in, 206–7, 215n.6; mother in, 199–200, 205–7, 208, 209–10, 213; and narcissism, 197, 201, 203, 212; political interpretations of, 198–99, 212; psychology of hunger in, 198, 199–206; and religious practice, x–xi, 198, 210, 214; and tragedy, x, 197–98, 209–10, 214, 216n.10
- Corvée* system, 7, 12
- Cosimo, Piero di, 71
- Cratylism, 152, 153
- Crewe, Jonathan V., 184, 195n.7
- Cromwell, Oliver, 327–28, 331
- Curio collections, Renaissance, 65–68
- Daniel, Arnaut, 48, 180n.22
- Daniel, Samuel, 109, 123, 340, 348
- Dante Alighieri, 137, 138, 157n.7, 159n.12
- Davis, Natalie Zemon, 61n.30, 77, 86
- Deconstruction, vii, x, 183
- Dee, John, 74
- De Esquivel, Pedro, 357, 361n.49
- Dekker, Thomas, 268
- De Man, Paul, 154
- Demesne*, legal concept of, x, 175
- Derrida, Jacques, 154, 155, 306
- Descartes, René, 214, 295
- Domain of art, vii; and authority, 174–75; and authorship, 174–75; collective production of, xi; and concept of *demesne*, 175; and demonic possession, xii; and the domain of theology, xii; and the domain of politics, xii; and literature, x, xi, xii; and the lyric, 174–75; and *The Shepheardes Calender*, 174–76. *See also* Authorship; Literary marketplace; Property, literary
- Donne, John, 164, 168, 175
- Drama. *See* Elizabethan theater; Shakespearean drama; *names of individual dramatists*
- Drayton, Michael, 124, 138, 335–41, 342, 344–47, 352–57, 360n.34; anti-Jacobean sentiments of, 344–46. *See also* *Poly-Olbion*
- Dryden, John, 88
- Dugdale, William, 351
- Duns Scotus, John, 193–94
- Dürer, Albrecht, viii; apocalyptic dream of, 7–8, 27n.12; and artistic consequences of historical change, 1, 3, 9–14; and genre, 9–10, 27nn. 15, 18; *The Little Passion*, 5, 8; loyalty to Luther of, 7–9; *The Painter's Manual*, 1–7, 9; and the Peasants' War, 16–17, 27n.18; plans for civic monuments, 1–4, 6. *See also* Peasants' War Monument
- Dyer, Edward, 174
- Eagleton, Terry, 306–7, 319
- Ebreo, Leone, 156, 162n.21
- Eclogues* (Virgil), 163, 164, 165, 170, 172
- Eisenstein, Elizabeth, 265
- Elizabeth I (queen of England), viii, ix, 21–22, 93–95, 106, 120, 126, 167, 179n.15, 224–25, 279, 344–46; court entertainments of, 32, 50–51, 54, 174; and “cult of Elizabeth,” 32–35, 53–54, 62n.42, 225, 330, 336; cultural fantasies about, 32–33, 35, 54; Ditchley portrait of, 330–33; and mapmaking, 327, 329–30, 342, 358n.11, 359n.13; personal appearance of, 33–35, 58n.11; and political repression of Familism, 307, 316, 318; and politics of gender, 14, 45–50, 53–56, 58n.12, 61n.31, 225; and problem of succession, 224–25; progresses of, 356; refusal to marry, 48–50, 94; secret service of, 133n.80
- Elizabethan literature: antimonarchical tendencies in, 345–46, 352–57; cultural autonomy of, 174–75; and historical narrative, 183–95, 212; love poetry, 107–24, 164, 167, 172, 176; lyric poetry, 164–65, 167–68, 170, 173–77; patronage of, 163, 165, 352; representation of class conflict in, 15–25; *sestinas*, 171–72, 180; *sonnets*, 95, 111–21, 123, 126, 140, 164.

- See also Pastoral genre; Shakespearean sonnet; *names of individual works and writers*
- Elizabethan society: and antimonarchical politics, [344–47](#); class conflict in, [14–15](#); cultural aliens in, [69–70](#); and cultural autonomy, [174–75](#), [184](#), [190–91](#), [243](#); cultural change in, [185](#), [191–92](#); and English language, [80–83](#), [91n.43](#), [327](#), [351](#); folk customs in, [75–77](#), [86](#), [350](#); patriarchal gender system of, [31–32](#), [34–35](#), [42–44](#), [58nn. 13, 16, 59n.17](#); public versus private, [52](#), [55–56](#), [95–102](#), [111](#), [118](#), [124](#), [126](#). See also Popular culture
- Elizabethan theater: aristocratic patronage of, [55–56](#); and copyright law, [266–70](#); and courtly masques, [32](#), [50–51](#), [54](#), [174](#), [235–36](#), [271–72](#), [340](#); cultural otherness portrayed in, [69–70](#), [75](#), [78](#), [86](#); decline of, [281](#); and regal spectacles, [235–36](#), [279](#), [281](#), [291](#), [296](#), [301nn.10, 12](#); “War of the Theaters,” [268](#). See also Shakespearean drama
- Emmison, F. G., [14](#)
- Epistemology: and poetic representation, [236](#), [239](#), [241](#); and tragedy, [197](#)
- Erasmus, [181](#), [266](#)
- Essex, second earl of, [14](#), [34](#), [106](#), [122](#)
- Euripides, [210](#)
- Everard, John, [303](#)
- Faerie Queene, The* (Edmund Spenser): Amazonian mythology in, [36](#), [47](#); as courtly poetry, [353–55](#); and Elizabeth I, [58n.11](#); representation of class conflict in, [19–23](#); rhetoric of, [21–23](#); and royal absolutism, [340](#); *The Shepheardes Calender* as prototype of, [163](#); social order in, [22](#), [29n.36](#); and subversion, [21–22](#)
- Familism, [xii](#), [322n.14](#), [324n.49](#); discursive evasiveness of, [304–5](#), [317–21](#), [325n.70](#); group identity of, [304–6](#), [314–15](#), [316](#); influence of, [303–4](#); and mysticism, [308–9](#), [310–11](#); and ownership of property, [309–10](#); pacifism of, [320](#); political repression of, [307](#), [315–16](#); and sexual liberty, [310](#); textual versus personal authority in, [311–14](#). See also Niclaes, Hendrick
- Fascism, [12](#)
- Ferry, Anne, [126](#)
- Fineman, Joel, [vii](#), [ix–x](#), [27n.15](#)
- Fish, Stanley, [xi](#)
- Fitz, Linda T., [59n.17](#)
- Folk customs, [75–77](#), [86](#), [350](#)
- Formalism, [x](#)
- Forman, Simon, [32–33](#), [34–35](#)
- Forsett, Edward, [281](#), [292–94](#)
- Foucault, Michel, [75](#), [266](#), [300n.1](#), [316](#)
- Franch, Sebastian, [305](#), [309](#)
- Freud, Sigmund, [156](#), [218–19](#)
- Frobisher, Martin, [69](#)
- Frye, Northrop, [39–40](#)
- Fumerton, Patricia, [ix](#)
- Gascoigne, George, [62](#), [109](#), [121](#), [126n.5](#), [164–65](#), [168](#), [170](#), [171](#), [176](#), [178n.6](#), [179nn. 7, 18](#); and authorship, [130n.48](#), [178n.5](#)
- Gell, Robert, [303](#)
- Gender, politics of, [31–32](#), [35](#), [39–40](#); and Amazonian mythology, [36](#), [38](#), [40](#), [46–47](#); and classical tragedy, [60](#); in Jacobean England, [223–25](#); in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, [31–32](#), [35–42](#)
- Genette, Gérard, [154](#)
- Genre, [14](#), [16](#), [158n.8](#); chorography as, [347–49](#), [351](#), [353–54](#); and Dürer's monuments, [5](#), [9–10](#), [12–13](#), [27nn. 15, 18](#); effect of historical change on, [1](#), [3](#), [9](#), [12–14](#), [185](#), [191–92](#); heroic, in *2 Henry VI*, [23–25](#); and interaction between fictional and historical discourse, [183–95](#); and nationalism, [351](#); and poetics of praise, [158](#); and social rebellion, [9–14](#), [17–18](#), [23–25](#)
- Geocentric cosmos: and social order, [20–21](#), [22](#)
- Germany: Peasants' War in, [5](#), [7–14](#), [21](#); Renaissance art in, [1, 5](#)
- Gheeraerts, Marcus, [333](#)
- Gilman, Ernest, [235](#)
- Goldberg, Jonathan, [301n.10](#)
- Gooze, Barnabe, [164](#)
- Gorges, Sir Arthur, [123](#)
- Greenblatt, Stephen, [91n.45](#), [274–75](#), [279](#)
- Greene, Thomas, [244](#)
- Greimas, A. J., [154](#)
- Gresley, Thomas, [99](#)
- Greville, Fulke, [54](#), [122](#), [164](#), [345](#), [360n.29](#)
- Grindal, Edmund (archbishop of Canterbury), [166](#), [167](#), [179n.15](#)
- Guazzo, Stefano, [260](#)
- Habington, Thomas, [342](#)
- Hale, J. R., [328](#)
- Halley, Janet, [xii](#)
- Hamilton, Alastair, [303](#)
- Harding, Robert, [232](#)
- Harrington, John, [49](#), [53](#), [95](#)
- Harrison, William, [328](#), [329](#), [347](#), [348](#), [354](#)
- Harvey, Gabriel, [179n.13](#), [180n.26](#), [186–87](#), [191](#), [196n.16](#)
- Helgerson, Richard, [xii](#)
- Henri II (king of France), [70–71](#), [89–90n.9](#)
- Henry VIII (king of England), [80](#), [120](#), [183](#), [188](#), [224](#)
- Henry V, [82](#), [91nn. 43, 47](#)
- 2 Henry VI*: and heroic genre, [23–25](#); popular rebellion in, [23–25](#); property in, [24–25](#)
- Henslowe, Philip, [267–68](#), [269](#)
- Herbert, George, [164](#), [168](#), [242](#)
- Heroic literature, [1](#), [3](#), [10](#), [25](#), [27n.15](#), [212](#)
- Herrick, Robert, [164](#)
- Hibbard, G. R., [184](#), [185](#)
- Higden, Ranulf, [348](#)

- Hilliard, Nicholas, 108, 121–22, 123, 130nn. 49, 51, 131n.55, 132n.68, 133n.80; *Armada Jewel*, 94, 95, 96, 98–99, 104; artistic method of, 102–7, 114, 115–17, 123–26, 128n.26; *Gresley Jewel*, 97, 99, 113, 122; *Man Against a Background of Flames*, 103, 107, 117; as portraitist of Elizabeth I, 102, 104, 112; spy activity of, 133n.80; *Unknown Lady*, 102, 103, 115, 125; *Young Man Among Roses*, 101–2, 104–7, 119
- Hinman, Charlton, 229
- Historical circumstances: effect of, on literary discourse, vii–viii, x, 183, 191; and genre, 1, 3, 9, 12–14, 185, 191–92; of interpretation, 14; of poetic subjectivity, ix–x; of representation, 13
- Historiography, Renaissance: differentiated from medieval chronicles, 185–86, 347–48, 352–53; and Elizabethan chorography, 347–49, 352–53; *historia* versus *fabula* in, 183–95, 212; and historical discontinuity, 340; and representation of historical figures, 184, 186–88
- Hobbes, Thomas, 279, 281–300; on the “daemonic,” xx, 288–92, 300n.6; *Leviathan*, 280, 282–290, 292, 296–97, 300, 301n.11; on perceptual psychology, 288–90; and problem of subjectivity, 285–91, 292, 300; on self-interest, 282–85; on social contract, 281, 282–87, 291; on sovereign authority, xii, 281, 282–87, 301n.12; on sovereign presence, 279, 281, 291–300; on theatricality of power, 279, 281, 285–88, 291, 296
- Holinshed, Raphael, 328, 329, 348, 353
- Horace, 273
- Hotson, Leslie, 129n.31
- Huet, Marie-Hélène, 300n.1
- Hulse, Clark, 120
- Humanism, 18, 27, 155–56, 165, 171, 175, 185, 192, 194
- Husserl, Edmund, 155
- Ideology: and aesthetic autonomy, 174; of classicism, 273; conflict of, in English Civil Wars, 303; and decline of theater, 281; and genre, 9, 13–14; and literary subtext, 57; patriarchal, 32, 44; and religious heresy, 306–7; and representation, 13; and rise of professionalism, 231–32; of sovereign presence, 281, 295
- Illuminated manuscripts, 102, 112
- Intertextuality, 31, 44, 250
- Jakobson, Roman, 154, 158n.8, 160n.16
- James I (king of England), 130n.51, 224–25, 229n.6, 279, 315–16, 344–45, 356; and Drayton, 344–46; and mapmaking, 329, 332, 342, 346–47; and nationalism, 341
- Jameson, Fredric, 57n.2
- Javitch, Daniel, 179n.8
- Johnson, Samuel, 149, 163
- Jones, Ann Rosalind, 118
- Jones, Ernest, 218
- Jones, Inigo, 240, 272
- Jonson, Ben, xi, 89n.6, 262n.9, 263nn. 13, 16; and anticourtly satire, 26–61, 271; antirepresentational poetics of, 238, 240, 244; and authorship, 265; *Bartholomew Fair*, 267, 271, 272; and courtly masques, 235–36, 266, 271–72; *Cynthia's Revels*, 270–71, 277n.28; *Eastward Ho!*, 270; epigrams of, 239, 243, 244, 246, 273; *Every Man in His Humour*, 268; and Henslowe, 267–68; *Hymenaei*, 272, 277n.28; innovations of, 265, 274n.1; *The Isle of Dogs*, 267, 270; literary career of, 265–68, 270–74; and literary marketplace, 263n.16, 265–67, 271–74, 276n.15; *The New Inn*, 272; and patronage system, xi, 232, 243, 261, 266, 270, 273, 278n.33; poetic community generated by, 243–44, 245–46, 253, 265; and poetry of praise, 233, 240, 244, 247–53, 262; and problem of poetic object, 233, 235, 238–42; reader's position in poems of, 233–38, 245, 252; self-representation in poems of, 236, 241, 244–45; social status of, 232, 243, 254–55, 260–62; and theme of friendship, 254–60
- Kantorowicz, Ernst, 284, 299
- Krieger, Murray, 139
- Lacan, Jacques, 154, 155, 162n.20
- Lambarde, William, 347, 349, 350, 351, 360n.40, 361n.48
- Laplanche, Jean, 300n.6
- Larson, Magali Sarfatti, 231
- Law and legal theory: of copyright, 266–70; Elizabethan poor laws, 75; and particularity of place, 350–51; of property, 7, 175, 286–87, 350; and social contract, 281, 282–87, 291
- Leicester, first earl of, 48, 50, 93–94, 100
- Leinberger, Hans, 5, 8
- Leland, John, 343, 348
- Lever, J. W., 123
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 136
- Lewalski, Barbara, 305
- Lewis, C. S., 115
- Lhuyd, Humphrey, 361n.48
- Light: as image of sovereign power, 292, 294–95; as theme in Shakespeare's sonnets, 137, 140, 141, 142
- Lightbown, R. W., 300, 301n.11
- Linguistics: and “gross terms,” 79, 88–89; and popular culture, 82–84; and vernacular speech, 80–82
- Literary discourse, vii; historical contingency of, vii, x; power of, vii–viii

- Literary marketplace, 267, 274; and copyright laws, 269–70; and Jonson, 263n.16, 265–68, 271–74, 276n.15; and patronage, xi–xii, 270–71; and printing and publication, xi–xii, 265–66; and Spenser, 273–74; and the theater, 266, 268–69, 270, 275n.9, 276n.11. See also Domain of art; Property, literary
- Loewenstein, Joseph, xi
- Lucan, 106
- Lukács, Georg, 182–83
- Luther, Martin: portrayed in Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller*, 184, 187; role of, in Peasants' War, 7–9, 12–13
- Lyly, John, 174, 175, 191, 270
- Madness, Renaissance attitudes toward, 75, 288
- Maitland, F. W., x, 175
- Mantuanus, Baptista, 180n.26
- Maps and mapmaking, viii–ix, 327, 357, 361n.48; antimonarchic effect of, 327–28, 332, 334, 335–36, 356–57, 361n.49; and authority, 334, 338, 357; and authorship, 343–44; and decentralization, 357, 361n.52; and Elizabeth I, 327, 329, 330, 342, 358n.11, 359n.13; and history, 339–40; and James I, 329, 332, 342, 346–47; and nationalism, 328, 332, 336, 338–40, 343–44; popularity of, in Elizabethan culture, 332; and property, 327; royal patronage of, 330, 332, 342–44. See also Chorography
- Marin, Louis, 295
- Marlowe, Christopher, 75, 175
- Marot, Clément, 172, 180n.26
- Marotti, Arthur F., 57n.8
- Marvell, Andrew, 164
- Marx, Karl, 87, 199
- Mary Queen of Scots, 14, 93–95, 133n.80, 224–25
- Melville, James, 93–94, 97, 98, 100
- Mercer, Eric, 102
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 154, 155
- A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Shakespeare), viii, 59n.24, 60n.27; Amazonian mythology in, 37–42, 58n.16, 59n.19; class differences in, 55, 63n.50; classical sources for, 59n.19, 60n.27; as courtly entertainment, 32, 51–52, 55; and cultural production, 31–32, 55–56; demonic in, 58n.16; marriage theme in, 31–32, 36–40, 44, 52; menstrual symbolism in, 62n.44; patriarchal gender system in, 37–45, 52–53; Plutarch as source for, 44–45
- Milton, John, 164, 166, 175, 303–4
- Miniature portraits, Elizabethan, ix, 122–25, 127n.7, 128n.13; and architectural design, 96–98, 100–101, 104; and courtly fashion, 99–100, 122; limning of, 102–7, 114, 123–24, 128n.21; and literary rhetoric, 112–19, 122–26; as secret self-representations, 95–107, 122, 124–26. See also Hilliard, Nicholas; Precious stones
- Montaigne, Michel de, 81, 213
- Montemayor, Jorge de, 169
- Montrose, Louis Adrian, viii, 174
- Monuments, commemorative (Albrecht Dürer), 1–14, 27n.14; and Christ figure, 5–7, 11–12; class conflict in, 5, 13; generic status of, 1, 3
- More, Thomas, 175, 181
- Moss, Joan Deitz, 325n.70
- Mullaney, Steven, vii, viii–ix
- Museums, rise of, 66, 68
- Nancy, Jean-Luc, 295
- Narrative, Renaissance prose: and art of rhetoric, 186–88, 193; discursive strategies of, 183, 188, 193; history versus fabulation in, 183–95; and social uses of language, 184, 188–91; as totalizing perspective, 182–83, 194–95
- Nashe, Thomas, x, 28, 108, 181–95 passim, 196n.16; accused of sedition, 185; historical awareness of, 188, 190, 191; humanist training of, 193–94; *The Isle of Dogs*, 185; as modernist author, 190–91; as pamphleteer, 183, 192; *Pierce Penilesse*, 185–86; rhetoric of, 184, 195n.7; as satirical chronicler, 185–86; and self-representation, 193–94. See also *The Unfortunate Traveller*
- Nationalism, 328, 332, 343–47; and authorship, 340–41; and chorography, 344, 348–49, 351, 357–58; and *Poly-Olbia*, 335–36, 338; and royal absolutism, 340–41, 342; and Spenser, 346
- Neoplatonism, 135, 147, 309
- Niclaes, Hendrick, 322n.14, 324n.49, 325n.70; as Familist leader, 303, 305, 309–14; prophesies of, 308–9, 317; prose style of, 307–8, 313–14, 319; textual authority of, 311–14, 319, 320; views on sexual liberty of, 310
- Norden, John, 328, 332–34, 341–42, 344, 347
- North, Sir Thomas, 38
- Nuttall, Geoffrey F., 304
- Oliver, Isaac, 124–25
- Olson, Paul, 31
- Orgel, Stephen, xi, 301n.12
- Orphism, 169, 170
- Ortelius, Abraham, xiii, 328, 330, 343, 361n.48
- Ovid, 59n.16, 210, 226–27
- Owen, George, 342
- Paganism, 67, 71, 76, 289–91. See also Witchcraft, Renaissance attitudes toward
- Painter, William, 36, 38
- Panofsky, Erwin, 7

- Pastoral genre, 179n.15; and cultural autonomy, 174–75; and domain of lyric, 174–75; and Dürer's monument to Peasants' War, 12; and elegiac verse, 172, 176–77; expansion into lyric of, 164, 170, 173–74, 176–77; first English works in, 163, 171; and love poetry, 167–72, 176; and moral authority, 166–67; politics of, 165; and religious controversy, 165–67. *See also* *Arcadia*; *Eclagues*; *The Shepheardes Calender*
- Patronage, 55–56, 163, 165, 240, 272, 332; and authorship, 184, 330; and Jonson, xi, 232, 243, 261, 266, 270, 273, 278n.33; and the literary marketplace, xi, 270–71, 275n.8; and mapmaking, 328–29, 341–43, 359n.13; and printing, 273, 278n.33
- Patterson, Annabel, 266
- Peasantry: artistic representation of, 3, 5–15; literary representation of, 15–25; and popular rebellion, 5–25. *See also* Social status
- Peasants' War in Germany, 5, 7, 21
- Peasants' War Monument (Albrecht Dürer): betrayal in, 7–9, 13; Christ figure in, 5–7, 11–12, 26n.5; generic status of, 5, 9–10, 12–13, 27n.15; historical circumstances of, 5, 7, 9; orthodoxy of, 8–9, 11–12; and Peasants' War in Germany, 5, 7–8, 12; and the problem of representation, 11–12; subversiveness of, 9, 11
- Peele, George, 50, 174
- Peece, Charles Sanders, 187
- Percy, William, 109
- Peterson, Richard, 241, 254
- Petrarch, 138, 139, 152, 158n.7, 159n.13, 164, 172, 180n.22
- Pilgrim's Progress* (John Bunyan), 242
- Pitkin, Hanna, 281
- Plato, 137, 138
- Platter, Thomas, 65–67, 76, 78
- Plautus, 204
- Pléiade, 114
- Plutarch, 44–45, 59n.19, 60n.27, 157n.6, 201, 208, 215
- Poetry. *See* Elizabethan literature; Pastoral genre; Shakespearean sonnet; *names of individual poets*
- Political theory, Renaissance: parliament versus monarchy in, 284–85, 292, 299, 349–50, 357–58; and property law, 286–87; self-interest in, 282–85; and social contract, 281, 282–287, 291; sovereign as power made visible in, 281, 292–300; sovereign authority in, 281, 282–87; subject's relation to sovereign in, 281, 284–87, 291, 292, 294–300; and theatricality of power, 235–36, 279, 281, 285–88, 291, 296, 301nn.10, 12
- Poly-Olbion* (Michael Drayton), 342; allegorical frontispiece of, 336–40; and antimonarchical chorography, 335–41, 344–47, 352–57; and British antiquity, 339–40; and courtly poetry, 353–57; and historical genre, 339–40, 347–49, 352–53; nationalism of, 335–36, 338, 339–40, 359nn. 15, 17; undermines royal power, 335–36, 338, 353–54
- Pontalis, J.-B., 300n.6
- Popular culture: and curio collections, 65–68; and folk customs, 75–77, 86; in *1 Henry IV*, 79, 82–89; and pamphleteers, 183, 192; and popularity of maps, 332
- Power: collective, and the theater, xii; monarchic, and visibility, 356; representation of, 327, 330, 336; spectacular, 300n.1; theatricality of, 279, 281, 285–88, 291, 296, 301nn. 10, 12. *See also* Authority, royal
- Praise, poetics of: in Breton's works, 237–38; in Jonson's works, 233, 238, 240, 244, 247–53, 262; and paradoxical praise, 27n.15, 152–53, 159; in Shakespearean sonnet, 138, 140, 141, 148, 152–53, 158
- Precious stones, 93, 99, 103, 114, 116; *Armada Jewel*, 94, 95, 96, 98–99, 104; *Gresley Jewel*, 97, 99, 113, 122
- Printing and publication, 51, 130n.44, 165, 174, 274n.5; and authorship, 184, 265, 274n.4; and development of literary market, xi, 184, 190–91, 265–66, 269–70, 271–74; and oral culture, 274n.5, 275n.6; and patronage, 273, 278n.33; and *The Shepheardes Calender*, 164–65; and Spenser, 273–74; and the theater, 268–69, 271–73, 277n.22. *See also* Authorship
- Privy Council, 54, 86, 185, 328, 329
- Problems of Aristotle, The*, 43
- Professionalism, rise of, 231–32
- Property: and class conflict, 14–15; and copy-right law, 269–70; and domain of art, 175; in *2 Henry VI*, 24–25; literary, 265–66, 267, 270, 274n.4, 277nn. 22, 24; and map-making, 327, 349–50; peasants as, 5, 7; and royal power, 349–50
- Psychoanalytic criticism, 33, 198–200, 204–5, 218–19, 245, 300n.6
- Puttenham, George, 58n.12, 131nn. 55, 59, 159n.15, 165, 166, 179n.80
- Pye, Christopher, xii
- Rabelais, François, 17, 80–81, 266
- Raleigh, Walter, 46–47, 109, 122
- Religious discourse, xii; orthodox versus heretical, 306–7, 316, 319; political contradictions of, 192, 304–5, 309, 310–11, 316–18; and “Protestant poetics,” 305; and textual authority, 306–7, 312–14
- Religious institutions and sects: Anabaptism, 181–82, 184, 192, 303, 316; Catholicism, 305–6, 312; Church of England, 10, 305–6, 315, 320; Presbyterians, 315; Protestantism, 20, 33, 37, 165–67, 305–6, 312; Puritanism,

- 192, 305, 315; Quakerism, 304. *See also* Familism
- Renaissance art: applied geometry and perspective in, 1, 126, 235–36, 301n.12; display of, 96, 97; and erotic painting, 114
- Renaissance ethnography: and cultural otherness, 67–69, 73, 74–75; and ethnographic spectacles, 69–74; and popular customs, 75–78; and wonder-cabinets, 65–68
- Renard, Simon, 90n.15
- Representation, x, 13, 193; as differentiation, 349; and mapmaking, 331–32, 344, 355, 357; and mimesis, viii; and otherness, viii–ix; of power, 327, 330, 336; problem of, and Dürer's monuments, 11–13; and property, 25; and rhetoric, 183–85, 187–88, 190; and subjectivity, viii–ix; topographical and political, 349–350. *See also* Self-representation
- Reynolds, John, 345, 346
- Rhetoric, 28n.32, 184–85, 195n.7; of courtly life, 260; and cultural change, 185; in *The Faerie Queene*, 21–22; of love sonnets, 112, 114, 115–17, 121, 123, 135–36, 139, 141, 158; and narrative strategy, 186–88, 193–94; of political poetry, 118; and representation, 183–85, 187–88, 190; and social control, 18–19, 28n.32; and violence, 18–19, 21–24, 184, 188
- Rich, Penelope, 130n.45
- Richer, Marc, 295–96
- Riffaterre, Michael, 154
- Ringler, William A., 113, 114
- Risdon, Tristram, 342, 347
- Roberts, Jeanne Addison, 229
- Robertson, Jeanne, 131n.55
- Romanticism, 11, 164
- Ronsard, Pierre de, 114
- Rouen (France): cited by Montaigne, 213; ethnographic spectacles in, 70–73, 90nn. 13, 15
- Rubin, Gayle, 32
- Russell, Bertrand, 160n.16
- Sannazaro, Jacopo, 169, 180n.22
- Sartre, Jean-Paul, 155
- Saunders, J. W., 130n.44
- Saxton, Christopher, 327–28, 338, 343, 347, 355, 356, 358n.11, 360n.34, 361nn. 48, 49; as originator of county maps, 326, 328–30; and patronage, 328–29; royalist statements of, 330–32
- Saxton's atlas: and authorship, 328–29; and Dichtley portrait of Elizabeth 1, 330–31; and royal absolutism, 341; undermines royal authority, 331, 332
- Scholasticism, 193–94
- Seckford, Thomas, 328–30
- Selden, John, 345–47
- Self-representation: in Jonson's poetry, 236, 241, 244–45; and miniature portraits, 95–107, 115, 122, 124–26; in Nashe's prose, 193–94; and nationalism, 340–41; and ownership of property, 286–87; and political acts, 285–86; and sonnet rhetoric, 115–16, 120, 122, 125–26, 141
- Seneca, 45, 60n.27, 263n.16
- Serlio, Sebastiano, 1
- Shakespeare, William, 73, 78, 86, 245; *The Comedy of Errors*, 161n.16, 222; family situation of, 222–23; *Hamlet*, 124, 223, 268; *1 Henry IV*, 10–11, 82–89, 91n.45, 332; *2 Henry VI*, 23–25; *Henry V*, 88, 294; the *Histories*, viii; *King Lear*, 43, 332; and literary authority, 175; *Love's Labour's Lost*, 159n.13, 160n.16; marriage of, 223; *The Merchant of Venice*, 43; *Othello*, 160n.16, 197; *Pericles*, 223; and problem of textual authenticity, 219–20, 229; psychoanalysis of, 218–19; and representation, ix; *Richard II*, 279, 281; *Romeo and Juliet*, 159n.13; *Troilus and Cressida*, 145, 159n.13; *Twelfth Night*, 160n.16; *Venus and Adonis*, 160n.16; *The Winter's Tale*, 43. *See also* *Coriolanus*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *2 Henry VI*; Shakespearean drama; Shakespearean sonnet; *The Tempest*
- Shakespearean drama, 188; depiction of marriage in, 222–23; and epistemology, 197–98; and family conflict, 39–40, 222–23; and historical narrative, 211–12; and ordinary language philosophy, 197, 206; and popular culture, 86–87; problem of paternity in, 43–44; problem of royal succession in, 224; psychoanalytic interpretation of, 218–19; textuality of, 219–20, 229
- Shakespearean sonnet, ix, 157nn. 3, 5, 159n.16, 162n.23, 164; anti-Petrarchism of, 140, 143–44, 148–49, 151; homosexuality in, 145, 147, 148, 160; and poetics of difference, 139, 146–47, 150–52, 159n.15; and poetry of praise, 138, 140, 141, 148, 152–53, 158n.8; problem of subjectivity in, ix–x, 138, 141, 146, 147–48, 153–56, 159n.16; psychological realism of, 126; rhetoric of, 135–36, 139, 141, 150–51; visual imagery in, 135–38, 140, 141–46, 149, 152, 157n.5
- Sharpe, Kevin, 343
- Shepherd's Calendar*, *The* (Edmund Spenser), x, xi, 166, 178n.6; and concept *demesne*, 175; and cultural autonomy, 174–76; elegiac verse in, 172, 176–77; and European pastoral, 171–72, 176, 180n.26; as expansion of lyric genre, 163–65, 170, 173–74, 176–77; and historical account of, 163–64; and humanist tradition, 175; ideology of, 174–75; love poetry in, 167–72, 176; performance of, 172–74; and printing, 164–65; and politics of the pastoral, 165–67; versification in, 171–72; Virgilian influence in, 163–65, 170, 172, 177n.1

- Sidney, Philip, 95, 106, 108, 109, 111–23, 125–26, 130n.45, 133n.80, 177n.1, 179n.15, 261, 265, 345; *Defence of Poesie*, 18, 182–83, 185, 211–12; love poetry of, 115–22; personal circumstances of, 16, 115, 118–19, 122; political rhetoric of, 118; and social rebellion, 17–18; sonnets of, 108, 109, 111–23, 125–26, 130n.48, 131nn. 55, 59, 60, 132n.65, 133n.80, 140, 164; and vernacular language, 327. See also *Arcadia*; *Astrophil and Stella*
- Simonides, 157n.6
- Skepticism, 197
- Social status: in *Arcadia*, 174, 180n.21; in *Coriolanus*, 198–99, 202, 206, 210–11, 215n.7; in Dürer's monuments, 5, 13; in 2 *Henry VI*, 25
- Society of Antiquaries, 65, 344
- Socrates, 158n.8
- Speed, John, 339–40, 342, 344–45, 347, 348, 352, 356, 357, 361n.48
- Spenser, Edmund, 36, 108, 163–67, 174–75, 179nn. 7, 13, 180n.22, 345; and Elizabeth I, 61n.31; and literary marketplace, 273–74; and nationalism, 346; and patronage, 165; poetic career of, 163–65; and printing and publication, 273–74; and problem of autonomy, 174–76; and radical Protestantism, 165–67; on social rebellion, 21; and vernacular language, 327. See also *The Faerie Queene*; *The Shepheardes Calender*
- Stalleybrass, Peter, 118
- Stow, John, 342, 358
- Strong, Roy, 98–99, 106, 114, 128n.21, 129n.31, 130n.51
- Subjectivity: autoerotic origins of, 300n.6; historical circumstances of, ix–x; in Hobbesian perceptual psychology, 288–91; and political power, 285–88, 292, 300; in Shakespearean sonnets, ix–x, 138, 141, 146, 147–48, 153–56, 159n.16. See also Self-representation
- Sundelson, David, 221
- Surrey, earl of, 164, 181, 184, 187, 189–90
- Tempest*, *The* (Shakespeare), xi; absence of Prospero's wife in, 217, 218, 220, 229; family in, 217–18, 222–25, 227–29; magic as principle of control in, 217, 225–27; mother image in, 221; problem of sovereign authority in, 223–25, 228; psychoanalytic interpretation of, 218–19, 220, 223, 224
- Textuality, 57n.2; collective production of, xi; and religious ideology, 306–7, 319–20; of Shakespearean sonnet, 219–20, 229
- Theater, xii; and authorship, 266–68, 270, 273, 277n.22; and the literary marketplace, 266, 268–69, 270, 275n.9, 276n.11; and literary property, 270, 274n.4, 277n.22; and printing and publication, 268–69, 271–73, 277n.22; regulation of, 92n.54; and society, 223. See also Elizabethan theater
- Theocritus, 170
- Todd, Henry, 123
- Tofte, Robert, 109, 123–24
- Tottel's *Miscellany*, 164
- Tragedy: and epistemology, 197; and politics of gender, 60; and religious ritual, 198, 210, 214
- Trimpi, Wesley, 243
- Troeltsch, Ernst, 309
- Turberville, George, 164
- Tyrwhitt, Thomas, 161n.16
- Unfortunate Traveller, The* (Thomas Nashe), x, 28n.30; anomalous style of, 181–82, 184, 190; and chivalric romance, 188–89; discursive strategy of, 188, 192–95; history versus fabulation in, 183–95; and jest-book tradition, 188; representation of historical figures in, 184, 186–88; representation of language in, 189–91; and scholasticism, 193–94; social uses of language in, 184, 188–91; totalizing perspective of, 182–83, 194–95
- Unton, Henry, 96–98, 100, 107–8
- Utopia* (Thomas More), 175
- Vagabond Acts, 75
- Valois court, 114
- van Dorsten, Jan, 303
- Vernacular language, 80–82, 87, 327
- Virgil, 158, 163, 164, 165, 170, 172, 273
- Virgin Mary, cult of, 33, 50, 336
- Vision: Renaissance theory of, 295; Stoic theory of, 137; as theme in Shakespeare's sonnets, 135–38, 140, 141–46, 149, 152
- Wales, colonization of, 74, 91
- Wallace, Malcolm William, 108
- Weber, Max, 87
- Weimann, Robert, x
- Whigham, Frank, 260
- White, Hayden, 184
- Wickham, Glynné, 92n.54
- Wilde, Oscar, 161n.16
- Wilson, Edmund, 245, 263n.13
- Wilson, Thomas, 28–29
- Winstanley, Gerrard, 303
- Witchcraft, Renaissance attitudes toward, 36, 58–59
- Wither, George, 345, 346
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 197
- Wonder-cabinets. See Curio collections, Renaissance
- Wyatt, Thomas, 164, 165
- Wynne, Peter, 92n.47



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